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DEPARTMENT OF PUNJAB HISTORICAL STUDIES  
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

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DEPARTMENT OF PUNJAB HISTORICAL STUDIES  
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

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# Sukarchakia Misal : Its Rise and Fall

DR BHAGAT SINGH\*

Buddha Singh<sup>1</sup>, an affluent Jat farmer of the village of Sukarchak in the Majha tract of the Punjab, was the first historically known ancestor of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. His original name was Desu.<sup>2</sup> He was born in 1670.<sup>3</sup> He possessed 25 acres of land and three ploughs and a well. On this land he had built a couple of houses for his family and cattle. The place was named Sukarchak. *Sukar* means small and narrow and *chak* signifies a petty tract of land. It also assumed the meaning of a village. On account of this Desu began to be called Sukarchakia.<sup>4</sup> According to a tradition, it is also said that Sukarchak was so named as it was founded on Friday (Shukarwar).<sup>5</sup> Sukarchak was situated near Gujranwala, 70 ½ms. north of Lahore.

It is said that in his early days Desu sometimes indulged in cattle-lifting. Once Desu carried off some good cattle from the village of Nankhona. After a few days he met an old woman in the jungle. She enquired of Desu's whereabouts. She told him that Desu had taken away her buffaloes and a pair of oxen and she was going to get them back. He told her that Desu was a man of fierce nature and he would maltreat her. She said that when he knew her miserable condition he would take pity on her. She could not find Desu in the village but on return to her

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\*Punjab Historical Studies Dept., Punjabi University, Patiala.

1. Khuswaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan* (1811) MS., Ganda Singh collection, Patiala, p. 130; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, Lahore, 1885, p. 2; Ganesh Das, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab* (1855), Amritsar, 1965, p. 134; Gian Singh, *Tawarikh-Guru Khalsa*, Part-II, reprint 1970, p. 277; Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, Oxford, 1905, p. 153; Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjab*, (1891), reprint, Delhi, 1964, p. 337. Some modern writers wrongly name him as Budh Singh.
2. Some writers believe that Desu was the nickname given to Buddha Singh after his mare called Desi (Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 337; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 227; Prem Singh Hoti, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, 3rd ed. Amritsar, 1931, pp. 17-18.
3. Carmichael Smyth, *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore* (1847), Patiala, reprint, 1970, p. 14.
4. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. IV, Delhi, 1982, p. 293.
5. Kirpal Singh, 'Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Birth place, Gujranwala, *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XVI-II, October, 1980, p. 20.

place she was surprised to find all her cattle tied up there safe and sound.<sup>6</sup> One of his ancestors was initiated into Sikhism by Guru Gobind Singh in 1692.<sup>7</sup> Buddha Singh was a daring adventurer and, is said to have taken part in the battles of Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Singh Bahadur. The success which attended his exploits won him the reputation of being one of the boldest and the most resolute of the Sikhs of the Punjab. He built a fortress-like mansion at his village. He was always held in high esteem by the Sikhs.<sup>8</sup>

He used to ride a piebald mare called after him as Desi which had crossed with its rider the rivers of Jhelum, Ravi and Chenab fifty times. It is said that sometimes Buddha Singh covered on his mare's back a distance of over hundred miles a day. The brave and courageous Buddha Singh, who was a giant in strength, is said to have received during his life time some forty sword cuts and nine matchlock wounds, without his physical strength failing him.<sup>9</sup> In the words of Carmichael Smyth, Buddha Singh "was distinguished for the most intrepid courage; for his sagacity and shrewdness which bore him successfully through all his schemes, and for his ready wit and good humour. He was also famed for his regard to the rights and property of the poor."<sup>10</sup> He was very kind and sympathetic to the faqirs, the poor and the travellers. He died of apoplexy in 1716.<sup>11</sup>

#### Sardar Naudh Singh

On his death, Buddha Singh left behind two sons named Naudh Singh and Chanda Singh, the latter being the ancestor of the Sandhanwalia Sardars of Raja Sansi. Naudh Singh grew up into a healthy and beautiful youngman. During the times of drought he used to bring his cattle to graze to the Majitha village in the present Amritsar district. Gulab Singh, a baptised Sikh of Majitha married his daughter Lali to Naudh Singh in 1730 on the condition that he should get himself duly baptised.<sup>12</sup>

6. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

7. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 277; Waheed-ud-Din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, reprint, Delhi, 1976, p. 56.

8. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

9. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 153; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

10. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Prinsep, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (1834), Patiala reprint, 1970, p. 18. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnamia*, Vol. I (1854), Lahore, 1961 p. 369; Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Muhammad Latif *op. cit.*, p. 388.

Gulab Singh was a devoted follower of the *Khalsa Panth*. Under the inspiration of his father-in-law, Naudh Singh joined the *Dal Khalsa* under the command of Kapur Singh Faizulapuria.<sup>13</sup> He left his home and moved about in the inhospitable jungles along with his companions.<sup>14</sup> He came into prominence when in the accompaniment of Kapur Singh, he relieved Ahmad Shah Durrani of his baggage and heavy booty in A.D. 1749.

Sultan Khan Chatha, Pathan of Rasulnagar, forcibly converted six Sikhs to Islam. Naudh Singh and Chanda Singh attacked Rasulnagar, plundered Sultan Khan's property and brought back the Sikhs and baptised them again. Shahab-ud-Din of Firozwala captured a few Sikhs of village Karyala and removed the hair of their heads and beards. Naudh Singh and Chanda Singh plundered his village and put Shahab-ud-Din to death.

In 1749, Naudh Singh was wounded by a gun-shot in the head while fighting against the Afghan invaders. The wound did not prove fatal but he was incapacitated and lingered on for a few years without participating in the Sikh movement in the Punjab and died in 1752.<sup>15</sup>

#### **Sardar Charhat Singh (1732-1770)**

Naudh Singh had four sons : Charhat Singh, Dal Singh, Chet Singh and Maghi Singh. At the time of his father's death in 1752 Charhat Singh was 20 years of age. At that time Jassa Singh Ahluwalia and Hari Singh and Jhanda Singh Bhangi were well on their way to carve out their Misals. They had their *Dals* at their command and had established *rakhi* in certain areas. The *rakhi* system sowed the seeds of the Sikh political authority in the land. In the early stages the *rakhi* or protection was sought by the people from the Sikhs and later, in order to bring more territories under the *rakhi* system, the offer of *rakhi* was made to the people of the towns and villages of the Punjab and was actively pursued by the Sikhs as a regular feature of their activities. The word *rakhi* literally means 'protection' and in practice, it was a tribute received by the Sikhs to provide or guarantee protection against external aggression to the people paying it. The circumstances which led to the creation of this

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13. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

14. Ganesh Das Badhera, *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*, *op. cit.*, p. 135; cf. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

15. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 338; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 154; Prem Singh Hoti, *op. cit.*, p. 19.



system were correlated with the rise of the Sikh power.<sup>16</sup>

Charhat Singh, to start with, was in the Bhangi *Dal* but soon thereafter he began to nurse in his heart political ambition (*bu-i-riyast*) and came out of the Bhangi contingent and declared himself as holding an independent status.<sup>17</sup> In a short time he collected about 100 followers, and the number of his men began to grow rapidly and soon he had at his command 400 horse and foot.<sup>18</sup> He placed the tracts of Rohtas, Dhani and salt mines under his *rakhi* (protection) and received the due revenue of protection money from them.<sup>19</sup> Though young in years he started his career as a very active, ambitious and pushing youngman with a good fund of intelligence and capacity to take decisions immediately. He was resourceful and very influential among the Sikhs.

His father-in-law Amir Singh and brother-in-law Gurbakhsh Singh helped him in the execution and fulfilment of his political designs. Amir Singh, though in the grip of old age, exercised tremendous influence on the people of his native place, Gujranwala. He had been a very brave and a fearless soldier. His guidance facilitated Charhat Singh's rise considerably.<sup>20</sup>

Charhat Singh's essential condition, for recruitment to his contingents was that the incumbent must be a duly baptised 'Singh.' Those who were not already initiated into Sikhism with the baptism of the double-edged sword received the *amrit* from his hands before joining his ranks.<sup>21</sup> He made his headquarter at Gujranwala. He placed the *talukas* of Gujranwala, *qila* Didar Singh, *qila* Mian Singh and *qila* Sahib Singh and a number of villages around Akalgarh under his control. He named his Misal after the name of his native village Sukarchak.

The Muslim governor of Eminabad harassed the Hindu and Sikh population Charhat Singh, at the head of his young companions, besieged Eminabad. A lot of cash, arms including rifles and war munition and hundreds of horses fell into his hands.<sup>22</sup> Flushed with victory he planned

16. Bhagat Singh, *Sikh Polity in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Delhi, 1978, pp. 77-78.

17. Ganesh Das Badhera, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

18. Bute Shah, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, Daftar, V (1848), MS., Ganda Singh collection, Patiala, pp. 2-3; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 5; cf. M'Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, I (1846), Allahabad reprint, 1979, p. 149.

19. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

20. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

21. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 5; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 2-3.

22. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 338-39; Prem Singh Hoti, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

more ambitious enterprises.

For Charhat Singh's action against Eminabad, Khwaja Ubaid Khan, the governor of Lahore, decided to teach a lesson to the former. Charhat Singh took asylum in his fortress newly constructed at Gujranwala in 1758. It was besieged by the forces of the Lahore governor in September 1761. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Bhangi chiefs Hari Singh, Jhanda Singh, Lehna Singh and Gujjar Singh, Jai Singh Kanaihya and Sobha Singh came for the relief of Charhat Singh and encamped about 6 kms away from Gujranwala. Charhat Singh's men resorted to night attacks on the besiegers. Ubaid was compelled to lift the siege and retire to Lahore. Charhat Singh, accompanied by his daring young followers, made an assault on the returning forces of Ubaid. They plundered much of the war material, camels and horses from the fleeing forces of Lahore<sup>23</sup> and many soldiers of Lahore were murdered or wounded. In 1762 during the *Wada Ghallughara* Charhat Singh played a dominant role in opposing the enemy and raising the morale and spirits of the Sikhs.

### Conquests

Charhat Singh strengthened his fortress at Gujranwala. His possession began to assume the shape of a strong Misal not so easy to reckon with. Right from his early days he had been imbued with plans of creating a state for himself. He drove away the Muslim ruler of Wazirabad and placed it under its control, appointing his brother-in-law, Bakhshish Singh, as its *thanedar* or administrator.<sup>24</sup> Crossing river Jhelum Charhat Singh extended his sway over Pind Dadan Khan and its surrounding areas, including Ahmedabad, Khushab, Soen, etc., which were formerly held by Chanda Singh and Ganda Singh.<sup>25</sup> He also constructed a fortress at Pind Dadan Khan<sup>26</sup>. He captured the salt mines of Khewra<sup>27</sup> as well from the Bhangis, that proved a good source of income to him. He also conquered the areas of Dhani and Pothohar. The *zamindars*

23. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 8; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 3-4; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 373; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19; Baron Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and Punjab* (1845), Patiala reprint, 1970, pp. 270, 358; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

24. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

25. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 375.

26. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 9; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 4; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

27. Sohan Lal, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Bute Shah *op. cit.*, p. 5; Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix to Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar I, p. 29.

of Chakwal, Jalalpur and Sayidpur also accepted his overlordship.<sup>28</sup> He conquered Rohtas about which Qazi Nur Muhammad wrote in 1765, "Chartu holds Rohtas in his *jagir* and this has grown into a city by his efforts."<sup>29</sup> He attained victory in August 1761 over Nur-ud-Din Bamazai, a military commander of Ahmad Shah Durrani, on the left bank of the Chenab at Sialkot.<sup>30</sup> After holding out for eight days, against Charhat Singh, Nur-ud-Din escaped to Jammu in the disguise of a beggar. His troops, that surrendered, were allowed to go in safety. This victory made Charhat Singh a front rank leader among the Sikh Sardars. He also seized some war material including guns and other arms.

There are many incidents on record to show Charhat Singh's utter fearlessness and dauntless courage. After the *faujdar* of Sirhind was killed by the Sikh Sardars in 1762 Ahmad Shah Abdali appointed one of his brave generals Jahan Khan to head an expedition against the Sikhs. When the Afghan general reached Sialkot Charhat Singh, accompanied by Jhanda Singh Bhangi and Gujjar Singh, inflicted a crushing defeat on him.<sup>31</sup>

In December 1764 when Ahmad Shah invaded India for the seventh time he was joined by Naseer Khan Baluch chief of Kalat with 12,000 Baluchi troops. Qazi Nur Muhammad, who had accompanied his protegee Naseer Khan, writes that in a battle at Lahore Naseer Khan was opposed by Charhat Singh Sukarchakia, Naseer Khan's horse was killed by a bullet and he escaped to his camp. On his return journey also he was harassed by Charhat Singh.<sup>32</sup>

Jhelum town stood on the right bank of river Jhelum. In May 1767 Charhat Singh and Gujjar Singh marched upon it. Its Gakhar chief fled away to the fort of Rohtas for shelter. Charhat Singh entrusted Jhelum town to Dada Ram Singh.

A little later, Sarbuland Khan, paternal uncle of Ahmad Shah Durrani, after having been relieved of his charge as governor of Kashmir, left for Kabul, accompanied by 10 or 12 thousand troopers. When he was encamped near Attock, Charhat Singh and Gujjar Singh Bhangi

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28. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V., p. 4; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 9.

29. Qazi Nur Muhammad, *Jang Nama* (1765), (ed. Ganda Singh), Amritsar, 1939, p. 60.

30. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 3.

31. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 11, Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 5.

32. Qazi Nur Muhammad, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.

marched towards Rohtas to attack its Afghan *faujdar* in the early summer of 1764. The two Sardars crossed the Chenab into the Chaj Doab, overpowered the Afghan resistance and pushed forward beyond the Jhelum. Sarbuland Khan came out to confront the Sikhs, but was forced back to seek shelter in his fort. The Sikhs laid siege to Rohtas, but there was no reduction of the fort for four months. The Sikhs under Charhat Singh pretended to raise the siege and move away. Sarbuland Khan pursued the Sikhs and fell into their trap. Charhat Singh suddenly turned back and took the fort unawares. Sarbuland Khan was made a captive but was treated with respect due to his position both as a highly placed Afghan official and as an uncle of Ahmad Shah Durrani. Pleased with the kindness received at the hands of Charhat Singh, Sarbuland Khan offered to serve under him as a governor, if he (Charhat Singh) proclaimed himself king. Charhat Singh said, "The kingship is already bestowed on us by the Guru, we want to keep you as a prisoner so that the world may know that Charhat Singh had captured the uncle of the Shah." "But there is a still greater name in releasing me," said Sarbuland Khan. "They will say," he continued, "that Charhat Singh captured the uncle of Ahmad Shah and then set him at liberty." The Khan then paid two lakh rupees to the Sardar, who allowed him to return to his country.<sup>33</sup>

Consequent upon the victory of the Sikhs the entire territory between the Jhelum and Indus came into the hands of Charhat Singh and his Bhangi allies.

In a short period of fifteen years Charhat Singh became the master of Gujranwala, Wazirabad, Ramnagar, Sialkot, Rohtas, Pind Dadan Khan and the areas of Dhani and Pothohar which gave him good amount of revenue. Charhat Singh had on his administrative staff a number of efficient *kardars* which included Dal Singh Gill, Bhag Singh Virk, Budh Singh, Gaur Singh, Dharam Singh Batasa, Tahal Singh Chhachhi, Nirmal Singh, Himat Singh, Dada Ram Singh and Sahaj Singh.<sup>34</sup>

The Awans, the Janjuas, the Ghebas, the Alpials, the Bhandials, the Jodras and the Sagri Pathans of Makhad also accepted the overlordship of Sardar Charhat Singh.

Ever since Charhat Singh took possession of Pind Dadan Khan and the salt mines of Khewra Bhangis became his deadly enemies. The biggest

33. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 11-12; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Prakash* (1841), Amritsar, 1939, p. 390,

34. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 303-04.

salt mine was at Khewra, 8 kms from Pind Dadan Khan in Jhelum district. The others were at Nurpur in Jhelum district, at Warcha in Shahpur district and at Kalabag in Mianwali district. The mineral exists in vertical layers. The hills are nearly 400 metres high from the valley of river Jhelum and about 8 kms in breadth. The work in the mines could be conducted for nine or ten months in the year.<sup>35</sup>

Bhangis and Sukarchakias took hostile postures and there were occasional confrontations between the two. In 1827 Bk. corresponding to A.D. 1770 when Jhanda Singh Bhangi and Charhat Singh were facing each other for a clash Charhat Singh was mortally wounded by the bursting of his own matchlock.<sup>36</sup> At the time of Charhat Singh's death his successor Mahan Singh was only ten years of age.<sup>37</sup> Mahan Singh's younger brother Sahaj Singh had died in his early boyhood. During his life time Charhat Singh had contracted some matrimonial alliances which strengthened his position. Dal Singh Kalianwala of Alipur, renamed Akalgarh, was married to the sister of Charhat Singh. Sahib Singh Bhangi was married to the daughter of Charhat Singh. Charhat Singh's son Mahan Singh was married to the daughter of Jai Singh Mann. Some more matrimonial alliances followed Charhat Singh's death.

Charhat Singh left behind a son, a daughter and his widow, Mai Desan. Mahan Singh being too young to handle the state affairs, his step-mother Desan took over the reigns of the administration of the Sukarchakia Misal. In the words of Gordon, "Sikh ladies played an important part in the history of these warlike times...and Mai Desan ruled with vigour and diplomacy."<sup>38</sup> Her brothers Gurbakhsh Singh and Dal Singh rendered her great service in this regard. Desan was a worldly wise, experienced and an intelligent lady. In order to strengthen

35. Prem Singh, *Punjab da Samajak Itihas*, Patiala, 1979, pp. 68-70.

36. Sohan Lal Suri *op. cit.*, II, p. 13; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 6; Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 29; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 31; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 150; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 135; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 154. Some writers say that Charhat Singh died in 1774 when he was encamped on the bank of Basanti river where he had gone to support the cause of Brij Raj Deo, the eldest son of Ranjit Deo, the ruler of Jammu, against his younger brother Daler Singh. But none of the contemporary Persian writers corroborate it. Murray seems to be the originator of this information which was followed and copied by the later writers like Kanaihya Lal and Muhammad Latif. But all writers are unanimous about the cause of death.

37. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 31; Baron Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

38. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, London, 1904, p. 81.

her position she married her daughter Raj Kaur to Sahib Singh, son of Gujjar Singh of Gujarat.<sup>39</sup> Shortly thereafter she married her son Mahan Singh to the daughter of Gajpat Singh, ruler of Jind, in 1774.<sup>40</sup> These matrimonial relations united the three Misals for the purpose of combined action.

**Sardar Mahan Singh (1760-1790)**

Mahan Singh was born in 1760.<sup>41</sup> He inherited a state from his father, though small in size, but had all the attributes of an independent principality. Jai Singh Kanaihya, a close friend of Charhat Singh, became foster father of the young Sukarchakia chief. As soon as he found himself strong enough to strike, Mahan Singh snatched the fort of Rohtas from the hands of Nur-ud-Din Bamezai and occupied Kotli Ahangaran near Sialkot. The artisans of this place were very adept in manufacturing rifles.<sup>42</sup> Mahan Singh benefitted of this possession by arming his soldiers with new rifles. Then he proceeded against Pir Muhammad, the ruler of the Chathas on the eastern bank of the river Chenab.<sup>43</sup> Assisted by Jai Singh Kanaihya, Mahan Singh marched at the head of 6,000 troops and besieged Rasalnagar in 1779. Pir Muhammad surrendered himself along with his family. His territory was occupied. Rasalnagar was renamed as Ramnagar.<sup>44</sup> Dal Singh was appointed as the administrator or the governor of the place. This victory added lustre to the Sukarchakia Misal and many other chiefs who were the dependents of the Bhangis offered to transfer their allegiance to the Sukarchakias.<sup>45</sup>

In the words of Mahammad Latif, "Mahan Singh's fame spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, owing to his having captured Rasalnagar and the reputation for valour obtained by him was so great that many Sardars who had hitherto been dependent on the Bhangi Misal, now acknowledged the Sukarchakia Sardar as their chief, and transferred their allegiance to him, and deemed it an honour to

39. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 7; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 9; Ganesh Das Badhera, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 378; Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 9; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 152.

40. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 378; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

41. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 29; Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

42. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 15; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 8.

43. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 9.

44. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 382-84; Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

flight under his banner."<sup>46</sup> The Chathas did not accept the defeat lying down and soon got refractory against Mahan Singh. The army had again to be led against them. This time Alipur and Marcler were also occupied and Alipur was renamed Akalgarh.<sup>47</sup>

Chet Singh, the younger brother of Gujjar Singh Bhangi, had come to help the Chathas. Mahan Singh captured and imprisoned him in the fort of Gujranwala. Sahib Singh's wife, Raj Kaur, who was the sister of Mahan Singh came from Gujrat to Gujranwala to secure Chet Singh's release. Mahan Singh paid no attention to her implorings and did not liberate the Bhangi Sardar.

On his return from Rasulnagar Mahan Singh received the happy tidings of the birth of a son who was originally named Budh Singh<sup>48</sup> but later named Ranjit Singh as he was born in the days of conquest. The birth took place on November 13, 1780,<sup>49</sup> at Gujranwala.

Mahan Singh led his next expedition against Pindi Bhatian, Sahiwal, Jhang, Isa Khel and Mussa Khel. Desa Singh Bhangi failed to protect his territories. He asked his brother-in-law Sahib Singh's help. Sahib Singh could not help because of his own strained relations with his younger brother Sukha Singh.

In 1783 Punjab passed through a very critical period. For the past three years not a drop of rain had fallen, and one of the severest famines had broken out in northern India. *Adam adam ra me khurd, wa madar bachchan ra firo me burd. Jahan talaf shud.* Mahan Singh distributed grains to every body who approached him.<sup>50</sup>

Ranjit Deo, the ruler of Jammu, died in 1782. His death was followed by a dispute of succession between his sons Brij Raj and Daler Singh. Brij Raj emerged victorious. But Brij Raj Deo proved to be a weak and an inefficient ruler. The Kanaihyas and Bhangis, taking advantage of this position, occupied some of the territories of Jammu. Brij Deo made an appeal to Mahan Singh for help. He marched at the head of his army to Jammu but the powerful combination of his enemies compelled Brij Raj Deo to pay tribute of 50,000 rupees to the victorious Haqiqat Singh

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46. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 341.

47. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 20; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 9-10; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 99.

48. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 19.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

50. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. IV, Delhi, 1982, p. 309.

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Kanaihya<sup>51</sup> and thus the Sukarchakia chief could not be of any help to Brij Deo.

About six months later Mahan Singh again got a chance to go to Jammu, this time not in support of Brij Raj Deo but against him. Brij Deo refused to pay the stipulated tribute to the Kanaihyas who invited Mahan Singh to join them in their invasion of Jammu. Brij Raj Deo finding himself unequal to the situation ran away into the hills of Vaishno Devi. This took place towards the close of January 1784. Haqiqat Singh Kanaihya and Mahan Singh had made a pact to attack and plunder Jammu jointly, but the Sukarchakia chief did it alone. Mahan Singh came back with a heavy baggage of booty from Jammu.<sup>52</sup> It is said that Mahan Singh's booty was worth a crore of rupees.

In the year 1784 Mahan Singh came to Amritsar<sup>53</sup> on the occasion of *Diwali*. Most of the chiefs of the Misals including Jai Singh Kanaihya had assembled there. Jai Singh was held in high esteem by all other Sardars of the Misals. Mahan Singh visited Jai Singh to pay his regards to him. During the meeting Jai Singh, who was jealous of the growing power of the Sukarchakias insulted Mahan Singh by his remarks, "Go away, you Bhagtia (dancing boy); I do not want to hear your sentimental talk." This was too much to be borne in silence by so haughty and impervious a young chief as Mahan Singh was.<sup>54</sup> Jai Singh also demanded a share from the booty which he had brought from Jammu.<sup>55</sup> Mahan Singh felt highly enraged at the rude treatment shown to him by the Kanaihya chief who ordered his men that Mahan Singh should not be allowed to go out of Amritsar. He should be made captive and produced before him. After a minor clash outside Amritsar both sides withdrew and went to their respective places, but Mahan Singh was not in a position to take revenge single-handed. He invited Jassa Singh Ramgarhia from Hansi and Hissar where he was living in a sort of exile as he had been driven

51. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 156 ; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 342 ; C.H. Payne, *History of the Sikhs*, London, n.d., p. 68.

52. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 10 ; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 21; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-57.

53. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 21, Prinsep, *op. cit.*, II, p. 34; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

54. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 343; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 35 ; Baron Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

55. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 10; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 278 ; Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 157.



out of his possessions by Jai Singh.<sup>56</sup> Sansar Chand Katoch, the ruler of Kangra, who was another enemy of the Kanaihyas, was also called by Mahan Singh to join him. The three chiefs, with their combined forces, marched against the Kanhaiyas. The battle was fought at Achal Batala and Jai Singh's son Gurbakhsh Singh, who had advanced with a force of 8,000 to oppose Mahan Singh, was struck by a bullet at the very first charge and was killed.<sup>57</sup> In the course of fighting the Kanaihyas were routed, thus humbling the old Kanaihya chief. After the battle of Achal Batala Jai Singh retired to Naushehra where another battle was fought against Mahan Singh. Both sides sustained heavy losses, but Jai Singh suffered a defeat. Ramgarhia and Katoch chiefs got back their territories already captured by the Kanaihyas.<sup>58</sup>

Finding the Sukarchakia Misal in its ascendancy, in 1786, Sada Kaur, widow of Gurbakhsh Singh Kanaihya, proposed the betrothal of her only daughter Mehtab Kaur to Ranjit Singh, the young son of Mahan Singh.<sup>59</sup> After Ranjit Singh's recovery from an attack of small pox and high fever at Jammu during Mahan Singh's campaign to that place in 1786, the latter held a magnificent function at Gujranwala. Many Sardars came to offer congratulations. Jai Singh Kanaihya also attended the function. There he made a formal proposal of his grand-daughter's betrothal with Mahan Singh's son, which was accepted. With this matrimonial alliance peace was restored between the two contending Misals. This alliance proved very helpful to Ranjit Singh in his future conquests and consolidation of the Punjab under his sway.<sup>60</sup>

As referred to above Mahan Singh's sister was married to Sahib Singh of Gujrat. After the death of his father, Gujjar Singh in 1788, Sahib Singh became the ruler of Gujrat. Mahan Singh demanded *Haq-i-hakmana*, succession money, or tribute from Sahib Singh who refused to give any. The hackneyed maxim that, "kingship knows no kinship" so aptly applied to the situation. To promote the interests of

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56. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 22; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 12; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 35; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 343.
57. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 92; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 22; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 36; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 278-79; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 12; Baron Hugel, *op. cit.*, p. 361.
58. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 24; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 24-26.
59. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 26; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 15-16.
60. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 36; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 25; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 285.

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ones state even close blood relationship was disregarded. Sahib Singh was the husband of Mahan Singh's real sister. Hostilities commenced between the two. Sahib Singh took asylum in the fort of Sodhra which was besieged by Mahan Singh.<sup>61</sup> Mahan Singh's sister Raj Kaur, waited upon her brother and tried to dissuade him from fighting. Mahan Singh did not care to heed to her entreaties. The Sukarchakia chief was having a failing health due to over-work and exhaustion and in the course of the siege of Sodhra when the victory was just in sight he was suddenly taken ill, by a violent attack of fever. Handing over the charge of the siege to his ten year old son Ranjit Singh, Mahan Singh retired to Gujranwala where he expired on the 5th Baisakh, 1847 Bk., corresponding to April 15, 1790,<sup>62</sup> as a result of severe dysentery.<sup>63</sup> Thus the death removed the ambitious and courageous Sukarchakia chief from the stage of history in early youth at the age of thirty. According to Hari Ram Gupta, "There is not the least doubt about it that if he had lived ten years longer, he would have become the sole monarch of the whole of northern India from the Khaibar Pass to the Ganga, and from the Himalyas to the Arabian sea, and Emperor Shah Alam II would have become his protege."<sup>64</sup>

In the words of Muhammad Latif, "Mahan Singh was brave, enterprising and prudent beyond his years; and the age in which he lived highly favoured his ambitious schemes. . . . His early feats in arms had acquired for him so great a reputation that many influential independent Sardars joined his banner. His rapid successes gave him an ascendancy over all the Sikh chiefs. His military genius, undaunted courage, stern temper and rigid observance of the rules of delicacy and honour, at times involved him in serious trouble, but he honourably acquitted himself on all

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61. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 27; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 16; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

62. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 28; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 17; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 137; J. Skinner, *Haqaaq-i-Rajgan*, (MS, G.S. collection), (1830), p. 105. A letter written by a Maratha *vakil* at Delhi to the Peshwa at Poona in May 1790 conveying the news that, "a great Sikh Sardar named Mahan Singh died." (DYMR-II, letter No. 15 dated May 1790, English version in Ganda Singh's private collection, Patiala); Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 285. Some writers depending on later or unreliable sources fix Mahan Singh's death in 1792 which is incorrect.

63. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

64. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 313.

such occasions. At an early age he shook off the trammels of his mother's guardianship to pave the way for his own greatness."<sup>65</sup>

James Browne, in 1787, estimated the military strength of Mahan Singh at 15,000 horse and 5,000 foot in the Rachna Doab and about 5,000 horse and foot in the Chaj and Sind Sagar Doab.<sup>66</sup> Imam-ud-Din Husaini wrote in 1796 that Mahan Singh commanded about 22,000 horse and foot.<sup>67</sup> He left to his son and successor a state beset with danger ; but he bequeathed to him at the same time the qualities by which dangers are best overcome—courage combined with a natural genius for command and enterprise tempered by prudence and foresight."<sup>68</sup>

After his father's death Ranjit Singh succeeded to the chiefship of his Misal. Only at the age of nineteen he occupied Lahore and put his Misal on the road to glory of a consolidated kingdom of the Punjab. His rule gave to the history of Punjab a remarkable era of independence, pride, magnificence, security and stability.

#### **Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780—1839)**

Ranjit Singh was born on November 13, 1780<sup>69</sup> at Gujranwala. Very little is known about his childhood except that he had a virulent attack of small pox which deprived him of his left eye.

Right from the beginning he had displayed a spirit of bravery and adventure. Even at the young age of six he along with other boys, did swimming in the river Chenab.<sup>70</sup> In his early boyhood he was sent to Bhagu Singh's *dharamsala* at Gujranwala to learn Gurmukhi but he did not assimilate anything at school.<sup>71</sup> Later he received training in shooting

65. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 344-45; cf. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

66. James Browne, 'History of the Origin and Progress of the Sicks,' *Early European Accounts of the Sikhs*, (edited Ganda Singh), p. 43.

67. Imam-ud-Din Husaini, *Tarikh-i-Husain Shahi* (Ms 1798), quoted by Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

68. C.H. Payne, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

69. Some writers wrongly consider November 2, 1780 to be the date of his birth in place of November 13, 1780. The following books give November 13 as the date of Ranjit Singh's birth : Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 17, 19; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 8; Diwan Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 282; *Tarikh-i-Makhzan-i-Punjab* by Mufti Ghulam Sarwar (1867-68); *Tarikh-i-Gujranwala* by Gopal Das (1873); *Tarikh-i-Punjab* by Kanaihya Lal (1877) and *Maharaja Ranjit Singh* by Sita Ram Kohli (1933).

70. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 8.

71. *Ibid.*

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from a Brahman named Amir Singh who was matchless in that art.<sup>72</sup> At the time of his father's death he was a young boy of ten years old.<sup>73</sup> It is said that the *pagri* or turban-tying ceremony in respect of Ranjit Singh had already been performed in the life time of Mahan Singh. Ranjit Singh was too young to handle the state affairs but he had no difficulty in accession to his father's *gaddi*.

As told earlier Ranjit Singh had been engaged to the daughter of an intelligent and a brave lady Rani Sada Kaur, widow of Gurbakhsh Singh<sup>74</sup> of Kanaihya Misal. In his early years Ranjit Singh was fortunate in having the help of a shrewd and far-sighted woman as Sada Kaur was. Sardar Dal Singh Gill and Gurbakhsh Singh of Wazirabad were appointed to look after the army and administrative affairs were conducted by Diwan Lakhpat Rai popularly known as Lakhu.<sup>75</sup> Ranjit Singh's mother Raj Kaur also supervised the administrative business.<sup>76</sup>

In 1795<sup>77</sup> at the age of 15 Ranjit Singh got himself married to Mehtab Kaur, daughter of Sada Kaur.

He had his second marriage with Datar Kaur, sister of Sardar Gian Singh Nakkai, in 1798. She was popularly known as Mai Nakkain. Kharak Singh was born to her in 1801.

At the time of Ranjit Singh's accession to power, the Punjab was divided into a number of petty principalities and some of the leaders were not on happy terms with one another. The people of the province were generally devoid of a sense of unity. The Sikh confederacies had already been weakened. The Afghans under Zaman Shah were again threatening to establish their overlordship in the Punjab. The English had also started to take interest in this part of the country as their future sphere of influence. Besides, there were some Pathan possessions, adjoining hill states under the Hindu Rajas and several small and petty principalities that dotted the map of the Punjab. "In the 1790s, the Punjab looked like

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72. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

73. As told earlier Mahan Singh died in 1790 when Ranjit Singh was 10 years old and not 11 years as written by Ali-ud-Din Mufti or 12 years as written by Muhammad Latif and Prinsep. But Mufti agrees with Amar Nath and Sohan Lal that at the time of assumption of turban of royalty Ranjit Singh was 10 years old.

74. *Bute Shah*, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 15-16; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

75. Ganesh Dass, *op. cit.*, p. 137; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 390.

76. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 137; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

77. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar II, pp. 32-33; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 19.

a jig-saw puzzle consisting of fourteen pieces with five arrows piercing it from the sides. Twelve of these fourteen pieces were the Sikh *Misals*; the other two, the Pathan—controlled district of Kasur in the neighbourhood of Lahore, and Hansi in the south-east under the English adventurer, George Thomas. The five arrows were: The Afghans in the north-west; the Rajputs of Kangra in the north; the Gorkhas in the north-east; the British in the east; and the Marathas in the south-east.”<sup>78</sup>

The province was a congeries of small disintegrated states and there was no individual power in the province which could pose any formidable danger to the adventures of a strong man. As early as 1783, George Forster had predicted that “We may see some ambitious chief, led on by his genius and success, absorbing the power of his associates, display from the ruins of their commonwealth, the standard of monarchy.”<sup>79</sup>

Anarchy and political upheaval always hold out an opportunity to men of genius. In the words of Lepel Griffin, “There is perhaps no more notable and picturesque figure among the chiefs who rose to power on the ruins of the Mughal Empire than Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the founder of the short-lived Sikh kingdom of Lahore. In the stormy days at the beginning of the century, amid a fierce conflict of races and creeds, he found his opportunity and, seizing it with energy, promptitude and genius welded the turbulent and warlike sectaries, who followed the teachings of Gobind Singh into a homogeneous nation.”<sup>80</sup>

Young Ranjit Singh who was aspiring for the consolidation of the Punjab, had to face an ambitious aggrandiser, Zaman Shah Durrani, who succeeded to the throne of Kabul in 1793 and had plans to seize the Punjab.

Zaman Shah marched to the Punjab in the winter of 1798 and reached Lahore on 27th November.

The Shah despatched a contingent of Afghans to Amritsar. Ranjit Singh issued out of the town and gave a tough fight to the Afghans and forced them to retire to Lahore.<sup>81</sup> Every night Ranjit Singh visited, with a few *sawars*, the suburbs of the city of Lahore and attacked the forces of the Shah at night with a view to harassing him.<sup>82</sup>

78. Khushwant Singh, *Ranjit Singh*, London, 1962, p. 28.

79. Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England*, Vol. I, London, 1798, p. 295.

80. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

81. *Imperial Records, Foreign Department*, 24th December, 1798, No. 24.

82. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 140; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar II, p. 39. Ranjit Singh gave this information to Captain Wade in 1827 (Wade's letter, 31st May, 1831).

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According to Sohan Lal Suri,<sup>83</sup> Ranjit Singh at this time thrice rushed upon the Samman Burj of the Lahore fort with a few Sardars, fired a number of shots, killed and wounded a number of the Afghans, and on one occasion challenged the Shah himself to a hand to hand fight, "Come out you, O, grandson of Ahmad Shah," shouted Ranjit Singh to him, "and try two or three hands with the grandson of the great Sardar Charhat Singh." But as there was no response from the other side, Ranjit Singh had to retire without a trial of strength with the Durrani.

During the four-week stay of the Shah at Lahore some of the Sardars met him there.

During his visit to the Shah, Ranjit Singh's representative probably negotiated for the *subedari* of Lahore.<sup>84</sup> But at this stage the revered Sikh Baba Sahib Singh Bedi pleaded with the Sardars to stop negotiating with the Durrani invader. They agreed to abide by his decision and when the Shah's agents came to the Sikh Sardars again, Sahib Singh Bedi said to them on behalf of the Sikhs, "We took the country by the sword and will preserve it by the same."<sup>85</sup> Then the Shah gave up the plan to win over the Sikhs.

According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti Zaman Shah left for Kabul after a month's stay at Lahore as Mahmud Shah, in collaboration with Baba Khan Qachar, had attacked Kabul. Diplomatically enough Ranjit Singh did not harass Zaman Shah on his return march rather facilitated his return so that he might not get irritated against him and think of hitting back at him at the earliest opportunity. Since the Shah had to go back hurriedly 12 of his guns sank in river Jhelum that was in spate because of rainy season. It is said that Shah addressed a letter to Ranjit Singh that after the level of the river water went down he might extricate his guns and get them sent to Kabul. Ranjit Singh brought out all the 12 guns from the river. He despatched eight of them to Kabul and retained four with him in his arsenal one of which was of iron and three of brass.<sup>86</sup>

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83. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar II, p. 39; cf. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 22; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

84. *Imperial Records, Political Proceedings*, 1799, No. 24; cf. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 22-23.

85. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

86. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 397.

### Ranjit Singh's occupation of Lahore (1799)

Twenty six days after Zaman Shah's exit from Lahore on 4th January 1799, the Bhangi Sardars re-entered Lahore. The three rulers of Lahore were not functioning in collaboration with one another.

According to Munshi Sohan Lal the people of Lahore were suffering hardships under the mis-rule of their chiefs.<sup>87</sup> The respectable people of Lahore including the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs met secretly and decided to address an invitation to Ranjit Singh to come to Lahore and arrange its occupation. Ranjit Singh accepted the invitation.<sup>88</sup> The letter of invitation sent to him was signed by Muhammad Ashaq, Gurbakhsh Singh, Hakim Rai, Mufti Muhammad Mukarram, Muhammad Bakar, Mir Shadi and Mehar Mohkam Din. It was sent through Hakim Rai.<sup>89</sup>

Ranjit Singh started from Rasulnagar and reached Batala and discussed the matter of occupation of Lahore with Rani Sada Kaur.<sup>90</sup> She accompanied him to Lahore. They had at their command an army of about twenty five thousand horsemen and foot soldiers. The people of Lahore had earlier promised Ranjit Singh to open the Lohari gate at his arrival there. On the day Ranjit Singh reached Lahore the Lohari Gate could not be opened as it was strongly defended by Chet Singh.

Next morning, that is, on July 6, 1799<sup>91</sup> Ranjit Singh led his men to Lohari Gate which was opened unto him. The eighteen year old conqueror entered the city triumphantly.

Mohar Singh was captured and produced before Ranjit Singh. Graciously enough he allowed him to proceed to his *jagirs* along with his goods. Chet Singh evacuated the fort next morning, that is, on July 7, 1799 (29th of the month of Har, Samat 1856), and Ranjit Singh occupied the fort the same day.<sup>92</sup>

### Confrontation at Bhasin (March 1800 A.D.)

Ranjit Singh's power was growing day by day. With the occupation

87. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar II, p. 40; cf. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 22; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, I, p. 397; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 41; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 23; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 398; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

90. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 41; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 23; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

91. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 24.

92. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 42-43.

of Lahore—the traditional capital of the Punjab, Ranjit Singh's power received a fillip. Other Sardars got jealous of him.

So they joined hands to restrain Ranjit Singh from his policy of territorial aggrandisement. After the festival of *holi* Sahib Singh of Gujrat, Gulab Singh Bhangi, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and Nizam-ud-Din of Kasur assembled their forces at the village of Bhasin about 9 *kos* on the east of Lahore.<sup>93</sup> Ranjit Singh came from Lahore. Both sides arrayed themselves in the battle field and no action took place between the contending forces for two months.<sup>94</sup> Each side was apprehensive of the other and did not consider proper to initiate fighting. After the expiry of about eight weeks Gulab Singh Bhangi, who had invited the other chiefs to fight on his side, drank himself to death.<sup>95</sup>

The death of their leader dispirited the confederate army which dispersed without achieving anything and their plans fizzled out.

#### **Invasion of Jammu (1800)**

After he was free from the expedition of Bhasin Ranjit Singh attacked Jammu. The ruler of Jammu had an audience with Ranjit Singh and offered him a *nazarana* of 20 thousand rupees and an elephant.<sup>96</sup>

#### **Possession of Akalgarh (1801)**

Akalgarh had been conferred on Dal Singh by Sardar Mahan Singh. Since Dal Singh had become hostile to Ranjit Singh the former was brought to Lahore by the latter and interned there in 1800.<sup>97</sup> Dal Singh assured Ranjit Singh of his perfect innocence and he was released on the intercession of Sada Kaur and Baba Kesra Singh Sodhi.<sup>98</sup> Dal Singh died shortly after arriving back at Akalgarh. Ranjit Singh visited Akalgarh for condolence. He granted a *jagir* of two villages to Dal Singh's widow for her subsistence,<sup>99</sup> and placed Akalgarh under his control,

93. Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, II, p. 46; Amar Nath, *op.cit.*, p. 11; Khushwaqat Rai, *op.cit.*, pp. 138-39; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op.cit.*, I, pp. 402-03.

94. Amar Nath, *op.cit.*, p. 12; Khushwaqat Rai, *op.cit.*, p. 139.

95. Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, II, p. 46; Khushwaqat Rai, *op.cit.*, p. 140; Ganesh Das, *op.cit.*, p. 142; Muhammad Latif, *op.cit.*, p. 352.

96. Amar Nath, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

97. Amar Nath, *op.cit.*, p. 13; Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, II, p. 49, Muhammad Latif, *op.cit.*, p. 354.

98. Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, II, p. 49.

99. *Ibid.*, p. 50; Muhammad Latif, *op.cit.*, p. 354.



**Assumed the Title of Sarkar (April 12, 1801)**

A grand *darbar* was organised on *Baisakhi* day, Sunday, April 12, 1801 in which many Sardars and notables and prominent citizens were invited to participate. Ranjit Singh assumed the title of *sarkar* or *sarkar-i-wala*.<sup>100</sup>

**Siege of Kasur (1801)**

It has already been referred to that the Pathan ruler of Kasur was keen contestant for Lahore but Ranjit Singh had stolen a march over him. Nawab Nizam-ud-Din had come to Bhasin alongwith the Sikh chiefs. He had also been inciting Sahib Singh of Gujrat against Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja wanted to punish the Nawab for his intrigues against him. According to Amar Nath the Maharaja sent a big army against him under the command of Sardar Fateh Singh Kalianwala. The Nawab suffered a defeat at the hands of the Lahore army and obtained peace through submission. He became a tributary *subedar* of the Maharaja and paid a huge amount as war indemnity. He also sent his younger brother Qutab Din and Haji Khan and Wasil Khan to Lahore as hostages.<sup>101</sup>

**Attack on Kangra (1801)**

Some of the territories of Rani Sada Kaur had been usurped by Sansar Chand Katoch of Kangra. In the words of Khushwaqat Rai, "Sansar Chand often uttered these remarks from his tongue; from the hair of the Sikhs I shall prepare the ropes for my horses" and spoke very ill of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh."<sup>102</sup> He was planning to further penetrate into Sada Kaur's territories. She informed Ranjit Singh of Sansar Chand's designs. Sansar Chand captured the fort of Garhdiwala and gave it to Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and Bhunga to Nawab Fatu Khan, brother of Ghulam Qadar.<sup>103</sup>

The Maharaja led an army of six thousand horsemen into Kangra. Sansar Chand ran away for his life. The territories of Sada Kaur occupied by Sansar Chand were restored to her. Nurpur was also taken from Sansar Chand.<sup>104</sup>

100. Amar Nath, *op.cit.*, p. 16; Gian Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 293.

101. Amar Nath, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

102. Khushwaqat Rai, *op.cit.*, p. 144.

103. *Ibid.*, pp. 143-44.

104. Amar Nath, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

### **Exchange of Turban with Fateh Singh Ahluwalia (1802)**

When the Maharaja went to Tarn Taran for a dip in the holy tank he expressed a desire to have meeting with Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. Both the rulers met in the presence of the holy *Guru Granth Sahib* and exchanged turbans to profess brotherhood.<sup>105</sup>

### **Occupation of Chaniot (1802)**

Territory of Chaniot was in the hands of Jassa Singh son of Karam Singh Dulu. His subjects were sick of him. The Maharaja led an army to Chaniot. Jassa Singh closed the gates of the fort. The siege continued for about two months. At last Jassa Singh evacuated the fort and Ranjit Singh placed it under his own control. The Maharaja gave Jassa Singh a suitable *jagir*.<sup>106</sup>

### **Occupation of Amritsar (1805)**

It was, then, held by Mai Sukhan, widow of Gulab Singh Bhangi, who had died at Bhasin by excessive drinking in 1800. She had the support of the Ramgarhia Sardar.

On the advice of Jodh Singh, the Ramgarhia chief and the Akali leader Phula Singh, the fort and city of Amritsar were evacuated by Mai Sukhan on February 24, 1805.<sup>107</sup> The occupation of Amritsar, the religious capital of the Sikhs, brought additional lustre to Ranjit Singh's name.

### **Jaswant Rao Holkar's visit (1805)**

Jaswant Rao met Ranjit Singh and requested him for help against the British. Ranjit Singh made all arrangements for his comfortable stay at Amritsar. After consultations with some other Sardars Ranjit Singh advised Jaswant Rao to sue for peace with the English. General Lake was also told that it was in the interest of both to conclude peace. Both agreed and the fighting between them was avoided.<sup>108</sup>

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105. Sohan Lal Suri, *op.cit.*, II, p. 51; Amar Nath, *op.cit.*, p. 20; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 27; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

106. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

107. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57. The date of occupation of Amritsar has been given differently by different authors. According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti (Vol. I, p. 404) and Ganesh Das (p. 146), Ranjit Singh, conquered Amritsar in 1803 and according to Amar Nath the occupation of Amritsar took place in 1802 (p. 27).

108. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 36 ; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 408-09.

### Malwa Campaigns (1806-08)

From 1806 to 1808 Ranjit Singh led three campaigns into the cis-Satluj areas. In 1806 there cropped up a sharp dispute between Patiala and Nabha over the possession of village Daladi, barely 2½ kms from the town of Nabha. Ranjit Singh was invited to mediate in the dispute.<sup>109</sup> On his way to Patiala and back he placed a large number of villages and territories under his own control in the cis-Satluj areas.<sup>110</sup>

In 1807 the Maharaja was again invited to settle the dispute between Rani Aus Kaur and Sahib Singh, the ruler of Patiala.<sup>111</sup> During this visit also Ranjit Singh followed the same policy of territorial aggrandisement.

In 1808 again he entered the cis-Satluj areas with a view to subjugating the cis-Satluj region. During all the three incursions he conquered and distributed a large number of villages and territories among his followers including Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, Mai Sada Kaur and Diwan Mohkam Chand.

### Ranjit Singh Helped the Ruler of Kangra (1807)

The Gorkhas of Nepal planned the conquest and occupation of the whole of Himachal Pradesh. After conquering Sirmur, Garhwal and Nalagarh the Gorkhas proceeded towards Kangra under the command of Amar Singh Thapa. Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra sent his brother Mian Fateh Chand to meet Maharaja Ranjit Singh and seek help against the Nepalese who were encamped near Kangra. Ranjit Singh expressed his readiness to help Sansar Chand.

Amar Singh Thapa finding himself no match for the allies, i.e., Sansar Chand and Ranjit Singh, retired quickly from Kangra.<sup>112</sup>

### Occupation of Kasur (1807)

After the death of Nawab Nizam-ud-Din in 1807 his brother Qutb-ud-Din Khan succeeded him. He did not like to remain under the overlordship of Ranjit Singh and got refractory. On the other hand Ranjit Singh did not like an independent Afghan state to function so close to his capital. So he decided to occupy Kasur at the earliest. Lahore forces attacked Kasur on the 10th of February 1807 and the siege of the fort

109. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 60 ; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 35.

110. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 60-61 ; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 35-36.

111. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

112. *Ibid.*, p. 62; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 38-39.

continued for a month and during this time a mine was laid under a wall of the fort which was battered. The captured Nawab was produced before Ranjit Singh who received him graciously and gave him the *jagir* of Mamdot that brought an annual income of one lakh rupees.<sup>113</sup>

#### Occupation of Jhang (1807)

Jhang was under Ahmad Khan Sial. In 1807 the Maharaja came to know that Ahmad Khan had concluded a secret treaty with Nawab Muzzafar Khan of Multan. The Maharaja sent a heavy force against Jhang and it was annexed to the Lahore kingdom in 1807. Ahmad Khan was provided with a *jagir* for a decent living.<sup>114</sup>

#### Submission of Bahawalpur and Akhnur (1807-08)

As a result of Maharaja's invasion of Bahawalpur in 1807 Nawab Bahawal Khan submitted to the Maharaja and promised to pay annual tribute regularly.<sup>115</sup> In 1808 Alam Singh the ruler of Akhnur, accepted the overlordship of the Maharaja.<sup>116</sup>

#### Annexation of Dallewalia Misal (1807)

Dallewalia Misal was annexed by Ranjit Singh in 1807. It had been under Tara Singh Gaiba who was supporter of Ranjit Singh. He had accompanied the Maharaja to Patiala a few days earlier. On learning about Tara Singh's death the Maharaja went to Rahon to condole Gaiba's death to his widow. Ranjit Singh occupied the entire territory of Tara Singh and gave a *jagir* of a few villages to his widow.<sup>117</sup>

#### Occupation of the Fort of Kangra (1809)

For some time past Amar Singh Thapa had been busy fighting against Sansar Chand of Kangra.<sup>118</sup> According to Diwan Amar Nath the Gurkha army thrown against Sansar Chand was about 50 thousand with two guns.<sup>119</sup> The Kangra chief sent his brother Fateh Chand as his emissary to Ranjit Singh for help against the Gurkhas. Ranjit Singh demanded a heavy price for the help in the form of possession of the

113. *Ibid.*, p. 64 ; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 40, cf. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 40.

114. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 212.

115. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 65.

116. *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

117. *Ibid.*, II, p. 67, Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 42 ; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 369-70; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

118. *Ibid.*, II, p. 86 ; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 151 ; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 60.

119. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

fort of Kangra. Sansar Chand agreed to surrender the fort and it passed into the hands of Lahore forces on August 24, 1809.<sup>120</sup>

On September 24, 1809 Ranjit Singh valiantly entered the Kangra fort and held a grand Durbar there in which the rulers of Kangra, Chamba, Nurpur, Kotla, Shahpur, Jasrota, Basoli, Mankot, Jaswan, Guler, Mandi Suket, Kulu and Datarpur participated. All the hill chiefs offered *nazaranas* to the Maharaja and on their return they received robes of honour from him. Ranjit Singh appointed Desa Singh Majithia in charge of the fort of Kangra with Pahar Singh Mann as its deputy *nazim*.<sup>121</sup>

#### **Occupation of Gujrat (1810)**

Gujrat was under the control of Sahib Singh Bhangi. He developed strained relations with his son Gulab Singh<sup>122</sup> who occupied a couple of forts against the wishes of his father. Ranjit Singh availed of this opportunity and in the course of two or three months he occupied the whole of Gujrat. Sahib Singh escaped to the hilly areas.<sup>123</sup>

#### **Conquest of Khushab and Sahiwal (1810)**

The territories of Khushab and Sahiwal were inhabited by the Baloch tribes and they had built at many places very strong forts. On the arrival of Lahore forces near Khushab its ruler Jafar Khan Baloch, finding himself no match for the Sikhs, fled from the town of Khushab.<sup>124</sup> After a severe fighting the Maharaja conquered the fort of Sahiwal on February 10, 1810.<sup>125</sup>

#### **Conquest of Jammu (1810)**

Before the Maharaja started for Khushab he had despatched a contingent to Jammu under the command of Hukma Singh Chimni. After a brief resistance the chief administrator Mian Mota handed over the state to the Maharaja.<sup>126</sup>

#### **Annexation of Wazirabad (1810)**

Jodh Singh, the ruler of Wazirabad, died in November 1809 The

120. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 87.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 90; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

122. Ganesh Das Badhera, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

123. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 100-01; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

124. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

125. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

126. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

Maharaja appointed the former ruler's son Ganda Singh as the successor of his father. In June 1810 there were riots between Ganda Singh and his relatives.<sup>127</sup> The Maharaja ordered Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, the administrator of Gujrat, to go and occupy Wazirabad.<sup>128</sup> Ganda Singh was relieved of his charge and was given a reasonable *jagir* for his subsistence.

**Annexation of the Territories of Faizullapurias (1811), Nakkais (1810) and Kanaihyas (1811)**

The territories of the Faizullapurias were situated on both sides of river Satluj. Budh Singh, the Sardar of this Misal, was not willing to accept Ranjit Singh as his overlord. The Maharaja ordered Mohkam Chand to mobilize forces against Budh Singh. Mohkam Chand, accompanied by Jodh Singh Ramgarhia and Fateh Singh Ahluwalia, besieged Jullundur. Budh Singh escaped to Ludhiana and sought the protection of the British. The fort of Jullundur and its surrounding areas were conquered by Mohkam Chand.<sup>129</sup> Budh Singh's possessions near Tarn Taran were also captured by the Maharaja's artillery officer Ghaus Khan.

The territory under the Nakkais was situated between Multan and Kasur. Sardar Kahn Singh, son and successor of Gian Singh Nakkai, had gone to Multan to realise the tribute from Muzaffar Khan on behalf of the Lahore Durbar.<sup>130</sup> Ranjit Singh sent Mohkam Chand and Prince Kharak Singh to the territory of the Nakkais to take charge of the same.<sup>131</sup> Mohkam Chand conquered the fortresses of Chunia, Dipalpur and Satgarha. Sardar Kahn Singh came back from Multan to find his Misal gone out of his hands. He was given a *jagir* worth twenty thousand rupees annually.<sup>132</sup>

Kanaihya territory was in the possession of Sada Kaur, the widow of Gurbakhsh Singh.

Sada Kaur who had been greatly helpful in Ranjit Singh's coming to power was estranged from him in 1821 due to some domestic circumstances and her territories were annexed to the Lahore dominions.<sup>133</sup>

In the scheme of having a strong and a united Punjab there could

127. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

128. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-02.

129. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 34; Lepel Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab* (1870), pp. 480-81.

130. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 108.

131. *Ibid.*, p. 109; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 61; M' Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 168.

132. *Ibid.*, p. 109; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

133. Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, p. 26; cf. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-02.

have been no place for many independent and semi-independent chieftains. And evidently it was, therefore, of urgent necessity that they had all to be brought into the fold of the new power.

It must, however, be said to the credit of Maharaja Ranjit Singh that he was always considerate and sympathetic towards the vanquished and granted to them *jagirs* sufficient for their decent and comfortable living. He knew how to handle a situation. When he was organising an expedition against Multan, he released Ahmed Khan Sial of Jhang and gave him a substantial *jagir* and thus attached him and his Muslim followers to himself.<sup>134</sup> Ranjit Singh was the political architect of the new Punjab and he never allowed his campaign a religious colour in spite of the Wahabis leading a crusade against him.

It is true that Ranjit Singh's policy of absorption at times estranged some of the Sardars into his opponents but he was always tactful enough to win them over to his side. He was thus able to create a new Punjab with a strong and compact kingdom with natural dependable frontiers on all sides, as large a kingdom as France.<sup>135</sup>

Divergent views have been expressed regarding Ranjit Singh's policy of unification. However, there could be much justification in his favour when we find that he united all the wavering elements together and converted the Sikh bands into a strong state with a strong political entity. Moreover by digging out a kingdom from the debris of confusion in the Punjab Ranjit Singh canalised the annual revenue of the Punjab amounting to over three crores of rupees, using it for social and economic progress of the country.<sup>136</sup>

#### **Conquests and Consolidation of Multan, Kashmir, Attock and Peshawar Conquest of Multan**

During Ranjit Singh's time Multan was considered to be invulnerable but due to its importance particularly on strategic and commercial grounds Ranjit Singh was determined to annex it. It was situated on the highway leading to Qandhar and was linked with Delhi through Bhatinda. It was one of the major trading centres between India and Central Asia. Ranjit Singh's state was surrounded by a ring of Muslim principalities. By conquering Multan the Maharaja could drive a wedge between the Muslim states of Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan as these

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134. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 212.

135. Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-54.

136. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

Muslim states could always plan a common cause against the Lahore Durbar. Financially too the conquest of the province of Multan was very beneficial to Ranjit Singh. With all these considerations in mind Ranjit Singh set his heart on the annexation of Multan. He had to lead about half a dozen campaigns to Multan in the course of a decade and a half.

#### First Expedition (1803)

According to Amar Nath, Muzaffar Khan, the *Nazim* (governor) of Multan, nursed rebellious plans in his head. Ranjit Singh ordered that all his army be marched in the direction of Multan. On the way he received *nazaranas* from the nobles of Nakka. When Muzaffar Khan got the news about the invasion of his territory by the Durbar forces he invited his friends to support him. Though the Afghans were out to help him but he got frightened and sent his representatives to meet the Maharaja about 25 *kos* away from Multan. Some amount was paid to Ranjit Singh who returned to Lahore.<sup>137</sup>

#### Second Expedition (1805)

According to Sohan Lal Suri, after the rainy season was over in the month of Asuj (September) Ranjit Singh led his forces towards Multan. He encamped at village Mohtam, 12 *kos* from Multan. He sent his envoys to the Nawab and insisted for immediate payment of the *nazarana* otherwise the army would attack the town. Just then, Ranjit Singh received the message of Jaswant Rao Holkar's visit to the Punjab and the Maharaja returned to Lahore immediately.<sup>138</sup>

#### Third Expedition (1807)

Muzaffar Khan of Multan had been secretly helping Nawab of Kasur. He had also provided asylum to Ahmad Khan Sial whom Ranjit Singh had defeated only some time back. The Maharaja wanted to punish the Nawab of Multan for his disloyal and treacherous behaviour. Durbar forces destroyed some buildings outside the town of Multan. Peace was settled and Muzaffar Khan offered rupees 70 thousand as *nazrana* to Maharaja Ranjit Singh who returned to Lahore.<sup>139</sup>

137. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23 ; Ahmad Shah Batalia (Appendix, *op. cit.*, Sohan Lal), p. 30.

138. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 57-58 ; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 32-33.

139. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-08.



**Fourth Expedition (1810)**

On February 20, 1810, the Maharaja started against Muzaffar Khan, and in the next four days the Durbar forces reached the outskirts of Multan. The Nawab was ready to fight the Maharaja's forces. The Sikh forces captured the town on February 25, 1810. Then they laid siege to the fort which lasted nearly for two months and mines were laid beneath the western wall of the fort.<sup>140</sup> In utter despair and disappointment the Nawab raised the white flag and agreed to pay a huge amount as war indemnity and *nazarana* which according to Amar Nath was Rs. 180,000.<sup>141</sup>

**Fifth Expedition (1816)**

After 1810 Ranjit Singh could not pay any attention to Multan for the next many years. During this time he was busy against Attock and Kashmir. Misar Dewan Chand led an army to Multan in 1816 Akali Phula Singh also commanded his forces to Multan. Phula Singh tried to make an opening in the outer wall of the citadel. The Nawab paid a *nazarana* of 80 thousand rupees immediately and promised to pay forty thousand more within the next two or three months.<sup>142</sup> The Sikh forces returned from Multan.

**Sixth Expedition (1817)**

The Maharaja sent a contingent to realise the stipulated *nazarana* from the Nawab of Multan. On the hesitant attitude of the Nawab an army was despatched to conquer Multan which was besieged but soon thereafter the siege was lifted.<sup>143</sup>

**Last Expedition and Occupation of Multan (1818)**

The Maharaja appointed Prince Kharak Singh to be the nominal commander of the expedition, though the operational part of the whole campaign was to be managed by Misar Diwan Chand.

The Maharaja personally supervised all the preparations for the expedition.

The Nawab laid down his life fighting along with two of his sons Shah Niwas Khan and Shahbaz Khan.<sup>144</sup> Nawab's two sons Sarfraz

140. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 421, Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 99; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 74.

141. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 55; According to Ali-ud-Din Mufti the amount was one lakh rupees, (*op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 421).

142. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 140; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 176-77.

143. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

144. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 217; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 257, cf. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 448; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 115; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

Khan and Zulfiqar Khan were captured alive.<sup>145</sup> The Multan fort capitulated on June 2, 1818.

The booty, worth 2 lakhs,<sup>146</sup> included *mohars*, diamonds, rare swords, rifles, shawls and rings, etc. All these things were sent to Lahore to be deposited into the royal *toshakhana*.<sup>147</sup> Lahore Durbar also got many good horses and camels and five big guns from Multan.

#### Occupation of Kashmir and Attock

The Durrani government of Kabul was disintegrating. The governors of Peshawar, Attock and Kashmir had declared themselves independent of Kabul. On regaining power Shah Mahmud, the ruler of Kabul, and Wazir Fateh Khan decided to oust Ata Muhammad Khan, governor of Kashmir, from power. At that time Ranjit Singh was in full control of the Punjab. The nobles of Jammu, Jhelum and Gujrat, through which entry into Kashmir was possible, were in the control of the Maharaja. Therefore, without the co-operation of Ranjit Singh it was dangerous from a military point of view to attack Kashmir.

A meeting was held between Ranjit Singh and Fateh Khan in November 1812 at Rohtas in Ranjit Singh's camp.<sup>148</sup>

Ranjit Singh accepted to help Fateh Khan against the Kashmir governor, Ata Muhammad Khan. Murray says that the Maharaja agreed to help the Afghan Wazir with an army of 12,000 in return for a detachment of the Afghans against Multan and nine lakhs of rupees from the spoils of Kashmir.

It is believed that Ranjit Singh's main object was not that of exacting heavy money or getting Kashmir by some strategy. He wanted to acquire local knowledge which could be put to use in future. The real aim, as events were to show soon, may be found bound up with the critical situation that was created by the Kabul Wazir's attempting to get across the river Indus and to extend his effective control to territories so close to Ranjit Singh's kingdom. Fateh Khan's attempt against Kashmir was only the first step in this connection. Kashmir would be followed by Multan and that would soon be followed by Bahawalpur and then

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145. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

146. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

147. *Ibid.*; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 219-20.

148. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 431 ; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 85.

many other areas one by one.<sup>149</sup>

Both the Afghan and the Sikh forces crossed Jhelum in December 1812, and entered Kashmir valley via Bhimber, Rajauri and Pir Panjal. Afghan forces were six *kos* ahead of the Durbar forces.<sup>150</sup>

According to Lahore Report the spoils of Kashmir amounted to forty lakhs of rupees and some jewels. Shah Shujah who was also imprisoned there was brought into Diwan Makhan Chand's camp and his chains were removed.

Fateh Khan also tried to get possession of the person of Shah Shujah who had already come under the custody of Diwan Mohkam Chand. Fateh Khan made many alluring offers to Shah Shujah to go over to their camp.

There were negotiations going on between Ranjit Singh and Jahandad Khan, governor of Attock, even before the launching of the joint expedition of the Maharaja and Fateh Khan.

#### **Occupation of Attock by the Maharaja (March 1813)**

Jahandad Khan, *nazim* of the fort, now felt that after the conquest of Kashmir it was his turn to be thrown out of the fort by Wazir Fateh Khan. He knew his limitations and clearly felt that he was no match for Shah Mahmud and his Wazir Fateh Khan. He approached Ranjit Singh and agreed to surrender the fort on the condition of giving him a decent subsistence allowance.<sup>151</sup> Ranjit Singh immediately offered the *pargana* of Wazirabad as a *jagir* for Jahandad Khan,<sup>152</sup> and despatched his army under the command of Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, Sardar Mit Singh Naherna and Diwan Bhawani Dass<sup>153</sup> to take charge of the fort of Attock.

The negotiations between Jahandad Khan and the Maharaja remained a guarded secret from Fateh Khan. When Fateh Khan came to know about it he was very much upset and annoyed.<sup>154</sup> Handing over the charge of Kashmir to his brother Azim Khan, Fateh Khan reached Peshawar and sent a message to Ranjit Singh to evacuate the fort of Attock.<sup>155</sup> The Maharaja refused.

149. Fauja Singh, *Some Aspects of State and Society under Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi 1982, pp. 298.

150. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 132 ; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 85.

151. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 88-89.

152. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 140.

153. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 89.

154. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 135.

155. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 140.

### First Sikh-Afghan Battle (1813)

At the head of a large force Fateh Khan laid siege to the fort of Attock. On the other hand Diwan Mohkam Chand crossed river Jhelum to reinforce the fort.<sup>156</sup> Both the Sikh and the Afgan forces lay face to face for three months without action. With the permission of the Maharaja the Sikh forces attacked the Afghans on July 12, 1813,<sup>157</sup> at Hazro, about 8 kms distant from Attock. This battle is also known as the battle of Chuch. It was a terrible fighting between the rival forces. Ultimately the Lahore forces emerged victorious. Fateh Khan ran away<sup>158</sup> to Peshawar. Hukma Singh Chimni was appointed as *qiladar* of the fort of Attock.<sup>159</sup>

### Second Campaign of Kashmir (1814)

In April 1814 again Ranjit Singh martialled his forces for a march against Kashmir. The tributary chiefs were ordered by him to join the Durbar forces with their contingents. The Maharaja held an inspection of the entire Durbar army at Wazirabad. The Sikh army reached Rajauri on June 11, 1814. Ram Dayal, accompanied by Jiwal Mal, Dal Singh and their contingents, reached Behram Gala<sup>160</sup> and conquered it and established their *thana* there and took possession of the hills of Pir Panjal. Ram Dayal was confronted with the forces of Azim Khan, the governor of Kashmir. There was a severe fighting between the forces of Ram Dayal and Azim Khan, on 24th June 1814. There was again bloody fighting at Shopian. Prince Kharak Singh's brave officer Jiwan Mal died fighting there.<sup>161</sup> Mit Singh Padhania also died fighting and his son Sardar Jawala Singh was given his father's place.<sup>162</sup> Ram Dayal acquitted himself very honourably. Two thousand Afghans were killed there.<sup>163</sup> Azim Khan was impressed by the bravery and intrepidity of Diwan Ram

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156. M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 170.

157. According to N.K. Sinha, this battle took place on June 26, 1813 (*Ranjit Singh*, ed. 1945, p. 48).

158. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

159. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 86 ; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 156 ; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 175.

160. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 82 ; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 172.

161. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 160 ; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

162. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

163. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

Dyal. Dwelling upon the friendly relations with Mohkam Chand, grandfather of Ram Dyal, Azim Khan is said to have considered it worth while to contract cordial relations with Ram Dyal and Lahore Durbar. He sent valuable presents for the Maharaja and assured Ram Dyal of wishing well of the Maharaja and his kingdom.<sup>164</sup>

### Third and the Last Campaign of Kashmir (1819)

In the beginning of May 1819 a large army assembled at Wazirabad. The army was divided into three big sections. One was led by Misar Diwan Chand, Zafar Jang Bahadur, and Sardar Sham Singh Attariwala and second contingent was placed under the command of Prince Kharak Singh. The third contingent, under the command of the Maharaja, stayed back at Wazirabad as a reserve force.<sup>165</sup>

The overall command of the expedition was entrusted to Prince Kharak Singh.<sup>166</sup> The Maharaja released Sultan Khan, the chief of Bhiamber, who had been in the prison of the former for the last seven years and sent him along with his expedition to Kashmir. He was useful to the Sikhs.

The Sikhs were confronted with Jabar Khan, the governor of Kashmir, who had 12000 horsemen and foot soldiers at his command<sup>167</sup> There was a fierce fighting and the Sikh forces were reinforced by the Nihang contingent of Phula Singh. Jabar Khan was wounded and he escaped to Peshawar.<sup>168</sup> The Khalsa army captured the fort of Shergarh and other outposts. The Sikh army entered Srinagar on July 4, 1819.<sup>169</sup>

### Conquest of Peshawar

#### First Invasion (1818)

A dispute between Kamran, the son of Shah Mahmud, and Wazir Fateh Khan resulted in the torturous murder of the latter in 1818.<sup>170</sup> This provided the Maharaja with the needed opportunity to move his forces to Attock.

Ranjit Singh personally led an army across Attock wading through

164. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 84 ; cf. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

165. M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 184.

166. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 253-54.

167. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

168. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 132 ; Ahmad Shah Batalia, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41 ; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 185.

169. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

170. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 119 ; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 160.

the swollen river.<sup>171</sup> Many Pathans were murdered and the alive raised the white flag accepting a humiliating surrender. Akali Phula Singh fought bravely in this battle.

### Second Expedition (1818)

An army was sent towards Peshawar again in 1818. Yar Muhammad, the governor of Peshawar, evacuated the town and the Sikh army entered it<sup>172</sup> on November 20, 1818. With the beat of drum it was announced that peace was to be restored in Peshawar.<sup>173</sup> The Maharaja appointed Jahandad Khan, the former qiladar of Attock, as the governor of Peshawar.<sup>174</sup>

Ranjit Singh had earlier taken Kashmir from his brother Jabar Khan and Attock from Jahandad Khan. Therefore, Azim Khan was incensed and exercised against Ranjit Singh. He wanted to engage himself in a decisive battle with the Maharaja.

The Maharaja demanded tribute from Yar Muhammad, the governor of Peshawar, in December 1829. He sent a few good horses to Lahore Durbar. Muhammad Khan, resenting the humiliating attitude of his brother Yar Muhammad, started from Kabul for Peshawar at the head of a large army. Yar Muhammad evacuated Peshawar under the plea that he was unable to check the progress of the Afghan forces towards Peshawar. He hid himself in the hills of the Yusufzais.

Muhammad Azim Khan occupied Peshawar without any resistance and declared a crusade against the Sikhs.<sup>175</sup> The services of hundreds of *maulvis* and religious preachers were secured to preach religious frenzy among the Muslims against the Sikhs.

General Ventura was for immediate attack on the crusaders.<sup>176</sup> The memorable and most bloody fighting took place at Naushenra between Attock and Peshawar on March 14, 1823. It is also known as the battle of Tibbi Tehri. In this battle the strength of the Lahore army was estimated to be between 20,000 and 25,000 and that of the

171. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 237; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 119; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 161.

172. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 119; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 161.

173. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 238; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 119; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 162.

174. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 238; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

175. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 202.

176. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, II, p. 304.

Afghans about 20,000.<sup>177</sup> The contending forces came face to face with each other. Akali Phula Singh, Garbha Singh, Karam Singh Chahal and Balbhadur (of Gurkha Platoon), all of them men of distinction, died fighting and Mahan Singh Kumedan was seriously wounded.<sup>178</sup> The Sikh forces became very furious and the crusaders took to their heels. Azim Khan got unnerved on the death and desertions of his crusaders.<sup>179</sup> He died of a broken heart on his way to Kabul.

The Sikhs captured many tents, guns, horses and camels belonging to the Afghans. As a result of this victory all territory from Jamrud to Malakand and from Barner to Khattak passed into the hands of the Maharaja. According to Lepel Griffin, "It was a critical contest and decided, once for all, whether Sikhs or Afghans should rule east of the Khaiber, the mountains of the N.W.F."<sup>180</sup> The Maharaja entered Peshawar ceremoniously on March 17, 1824.<sup>181</sup>

#### Expeditions against Sayyid Ahmad (1827-31)

In 1827 news came from Peshawar that one Khalifa Sayyid Ahmad had created a stir among the Yusufzais.<sup>182</sup> Sayyid, Ahmad formerly known as Mir Ahmad, was the resident of Barelli.<sup>183</sup>

Khalifa incited his followers against Sardar Yar Muhammad who was accused of having accepted fealty to the Sikhs and had become an apostate.<sup>184</sup> An army of forty thousand crusaders attacked Peshawar and occupied it. Yar Muhammad was killed<sup>185</sup> in the fighting and his artillery was captured by Sayyid Ahmad in 1830.

The occupation of Peshawar by Sayyid Ahmad upset the Maharaja. He immediately ordered Prince Sher Singh and General Ventura to reoccupy Peshawar. There was a sanguinary fighting in Peshawar, Sayyid Ahmad and his men fled away and Peshawar came in the hands of Lahore forces.<sup>186</sup>

177. cf. Foreign Deptt. Miscellaneous No. 128, 1823.

178. Sohan Lal, *op. cit.*, II, p. 304; Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 154; Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 316; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, pp. 201-02; Ahmad Shah Batalia, Appendix to Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, Daftar, I, p. 44; Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

179. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

180. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 209.

181. Sohan Lal, *op. cit.*, II, p. 304; Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 202.

182. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 234.

183. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

184. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

185. Bute Shah, *op. cit.*, V, p. 279.

186. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

When the Lahore forces returned from Peshawar Khalifa Sayyid Ahmad again raised insurrection in May 1831. The Khalifa and his adviser Maulvi Asmail were killed in an action<sup>187</sup> and the Afghan rebellion came to an end.

#### **Annexation of Peshawar to Lahore Kingdom (1834)**

Dost Muhammad led a large army towards Peshawar. He gave the slogan of a crusade against the Sikhs and also sought the help of the chiefs of Kunduz, Kandhar, Derajat, Behawalpur, etc., but received cold response as none wanted to risk his position against Ranjit Singh. The English were also approached for help but he had to fight single-handed and lost Peshawar to Sikhs.

No doubt the occupation of Kabul by the Lahore Durbar forces was within their reach but Ranjit Singh never wanted it for the simple reason that he did not like to be always amidst warfare with the Afghans. He was keen to deliver the blessings of peace and calm to his subjects, which could never be conferred on them in case his forces crossed the Khebar Pass. Ranjit Singh's march into Kabul would have been branded as a naked aggression and he was also not sure of the role of the British in the eventuality of such an invasion.

In the early stages Ranjit Singh wanted to keep himself away from the direct control of the Afghans or the tribesmen. Therefore, he kept the North West Frontier tribes and the Peshawar province under the local chiefs. But they did not prove strong, efficient and true to their salt, being indolent, shifty and undependable. The Maharaja also did not very much trust them. His Afghan governors of Peshawar, Jahanded Khan, Yar Muhammad Khan, Sultan Muhammad Khan and the Barak-zai Sardars, proved weak and unreliable. The Maharaja had chosen this course to prevent the flaring up of the Afghan's emotional association with their land and their national feelings. He was keen to mellow down their antagonistic and irreconcilable behaviour and their open insubordination to the Sikh authority.

Ranjit Singh's North West Frontier policy yielded historic results. The Afghans could not dare to invade from beyond the Indus during Ranjit Singh's reign.

In fact, the Maharaja was not so much swayed by considerations of territorial gains as by his keen desire to have a scientific North West

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187. Amar Nath, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-94 ; M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, I, p. 198.



Frontier—a frontier that would not, at any point of time, pose any threat to the security of the Sikh kingdom.

From the critical analysis of the contemporary, semi-contemporary and modern writers regarding the Maharaja's policy towards the British the following categories of views emerge. (1) He was convinced that his friendship with the English should best serve his interests. (2) 'He could never show courage of statemanship.' 'He looked pathetic, helpless and inert.' (3) He was convinced of the superior might of the British and he was awfully afraid of them. (4) He was a great statesman and knew his limitations. He adopted conciliatory policy toward the British as he understood the hard realities of the situation. His policy was not based on the fear of the British or cowardice.

According to Fauja Singh the Anglo-Sikh relations under Ranjit Singh do not seem to lend support to the views conventionally admitted. It would be unjust to the Maharaja to say that he acted pusillanimously or unwisely in his dealings with the British. The views which attribute lack of courage or lack of statemanship or Anglo-phobia to him seem to be quite unwarranted. Undoubtedly he considered the British as a superior power, more efficient, better organised and commanding greater resources but that does not necessarily mean that he was mortally afraid of them. Similarly the fact that his resources were smaller than those of the British does not essentially established that he lacked the capacity or power to confront them in the battle-field. The Maharaja had raised and trained the Khalsa army in such a way as to be rated equal to the army of the East India Company. And also there is not much justification in saying that the Maharaja had taken such a view of his friendship with the British as to allow his attachment to them to outweigh, all other considerations. Diplomatic statements made on formal occasions cannot be taken as a true index to the inner working of a statesman's mind.<sup>188</sup> When the British friendship served his interests he maintained and honoured it. When this friendship was no more helpful to him there was a change in the tone and temper of the Lahore chief as noticed by Captain Wade in November 1837. The Maharaja was feeling uneasy about the British manoeuvres in Sind and Afghanistan. From 1836 onwards he adopted a friendly attitude towards Nepal which was bitterly anti-British at that time.

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188. Fauja Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 368-69.

From 1827 onwards the Maharaja had lot of troubles from the side of the north-west frontier. Dost Muhammad wanted to capture Peshawar by force. So under these circumstances, if the Maharaja had to take a decision regarding the British he must keep in mind the situation in the north west of his kingdom. "Whether it was Ferozepur or Shikarpur or the Navigation Treaty or the signing of the Tripartite Treaty he had to make his decisions in full consciousness of the fact that he would surely be stabbed in the back in case he chose to go to war with the British. In such a case while his success against the British would be problematical, his loss of the Peshawar region to the Afghans was something which could not be avoided.<sup>189</sup> So to be able to fight against the British Ranjit Singh must come to terms with Dost Muhammad and that was not possible without surrendering Peshawar to him and the surrender of Peshawar meant virtually losing the whole of the trans-Indus Afghan belt. Then, the Afghans could also think of crossing Indus in a bid to make territorial gains from the Maharaja's kingdom. By fighting two enemies at the same time, that is, the British on the eastern front and the Afghans on the western front Ranjit Singh could not risk the very existence of his kingdom. Thus Ranjit Singh had to deal with the British pressures under extremely difficult circumstances and the policy he adopted in respect of the British was undoubtedly the best suited and the wisest one and at any stage of his life the reversal of this policy would have, in all probability, led to the liquidation of his kingdom carved out so diligently and strenuously.

#### **Place in History**

Ranjit Singh has been likened to many historical personages as Sher Shah Suri, Napoleon, Bismarck, Ibrahim Lincoln, Shivaji, Haider Ali, etc. In fact a person cannot be compared reasonably to another person so long as the circumstances of both were not similar. The circumstances under which Ranjit Singh carved his way to a kingdom were more unfavourable than those faced by most of the above mentioned great-men of history. The Indian rulers as referred to above had to fight only against the Mughals but Ranjit Singh created a big state despite the opposition and hostile attitude of the Marathas, the British, the Afghans and the Sikh chiefs of the various Misals of the Punjab. He was a great conqueror who got liberated permanently the north-west frontier of the Punjab from the control of Afghanistan.

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189. *Ibid.*, p. 370.

He gave a very efficient administration to the people and united the scattered and divided portions of the Punjab into a strong and well-welded kingdom. He re-organised his army on the western style and transformed it into an invulnerable force to reckon with. He was a statesman par excellence. He exhibited a wonderful grasp of the political and military situations confronting him. Undoubtedly, Ranjit Singh was the last great constructive genius among the Sikhs.

Ranjit Singh's eldest son Kharak Singh formerly ascended the *gaddi* on September 1, 1839.<sup>190</sup> In the words of Murray Kharak Singh "was weak, almost imbecile and utterly incapable of controlling the elements of disorder which the removal of firm hand of Ranjeet would release from confinement."<sup>191</sup> According to Syad Waheed-ud-Din, "Prince Kharak Singh was utterly lacking in ambition and wordly sense. His real interest lay in praying, reading the *Granth* and sitting with legs folded and head bowed in the company of holy men."<sup>192</sup> Before his death on June 27, 1839 Ranjit Singh nominated Kanwar Kharak Singh as his successor and Raja Dhian Singh as his *wazir*.<sup>193</sup> Dhian Singh conducted the affairs of the state according to the rules and laws practised under Ranjit Singh. Kharak Singh strictly enjoined upon all his courtiers to route every representation through Dhian Singh. Prince Naunihal Singh could not be present at the investiture ceremony of his father as the latter was apprehensive of his son's designs. So the ceremony was gone through hurriedly, without waiting for the arrival of Naunihal Singh who had to come from Peshawar. The Kanwar was against Dhian Singh. A serious danger to Dhian Singh's authority was posed by Chet Singh Bajwa, a relation of Kharak Singh's wife Ishar Kaur whom the Maharaja appointed his counsellor. At the time of his appointment Chet Singh was a raw youth in his early twenties. He lived in the palace with the Maharaja. He wanted to become an independent minister and was contriving to remove Dhian Singh.<sup>194</sup> In the words of M'Gregor, "Chet Singh had nothing to recommend him but arrogance and sycophancy."<sup>195</sup> The appointment of Chet Singh was a great blunder on the part of Kharak Singh as none liked him. The Dogras felt angry because

190. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, IV, p. 25.

191. Murray, W., *History of the Punjab and of the Rise and Progress and Present Condition of the Sect and Nation of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, London, 1846, p. 200.

192. Waheed-ud-Din, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, reprint, Delhi, 1976, p. 151.

193. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, III, part V, p. 147.

194. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 330.

195. M'Gregor, *op. cit.*, II, p. 5.

Dhian Singh had been degraded. Another factor, which turned the scales against the Maharaja, was his being too soft or lenient towards the British. He was said to have yielded to every demand of theirs, whether it was reasonable or unreasonable.

The Dogra Sardars, Faqir Aziz-ud-Din and a few other important courtiers implored the Maharaja to keep Chet Singh away from him. At a secret meeting, Dhian Singh showed two letters written by Chet Singh, bearing the seal of Kharak Singh. Through these letters the Maharaja wanted British help and expressed willingness to pawn his kingdom at 38 per cent of the revenues.<sup>196</sup> In all probability these were forged letters but were accepted as genuine. A decision was made to murder Chet Singh and to divest the Maharaja of all powers and to entrust Kanwar Naunihal Singh with the responsibility of running the administration.<sup>197</sup>

The decision was carried out in full, on October 8, 1839.<sup>198</sup> From this time onwards Kharak Singh was deprived of all his administrative powers, and all authority passed into the hands of Naunihal Singh. He reinstated Dhian Singh as his *wazir*. The Kanwar had "all the energy and talents of his grandfather, though with less tact and caution." He insisted on the British to remove the British agent Col. Wade from his post which was done. He was popular among all classes, especially the military. The Kanwar met a fatal accident on the very day of his father's cremation. Mian Udham Singh, son of Gulab Singh, who was with him, was also killed on the spot. It seems that there was no intrigue behind it. In the absence of any unassailable evidence to the contrary Kanwar's death may be accepted as a result of an accident.<sup>199</sup> Some recent writers like Sita Ram Kohli, Hari Ram Gupta and Khushwant Singh have also concluded after thorough investigation that the Kanwar's death was the result of an unfortunate tragic accident.<sup>200</sup>

Kanwar Sher Singh, the second son of Ranjit Singh, was the next choice for the *gaddi* of Lahore. But Naunihal Singh's mother Chand

196. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 28; Debi Prasad, *Gulshan-i-Punjab* (1872), p. 42; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

197. Pearse Hugh (ed.), *Soldier and Traveller*, London, 1898, p. 215; cf. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 497.

198. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 203; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 330; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 498.

199. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

200. Fauja Singh, *After Ranjit Singh*, New Delhi, 1982, p. 29.

Kaur staked a claim of her own, telling that till the Kanwar's pregnant wife delivered a child she should be accepted as a ruler.<sup>201</sup> Sher Singh retired to Batala and Dhian Singh went to Jammu.<sup>202</sup> The administration of the state under Chand Kaur suffered an immense setback. In her helplessness Rani Chand Kaur sent urgent messages to Dhian Singh to come to Lahore but he did not pay any heed to it. Rather he asked Sher Singh to proceed to Lahore at the head of an army to put an end to the Rani's weak rule. Sher Singh entered the Lahore fort and was recognised as Maharaja and Dhian Singh as Prime Minister.<sup>203</sup>

When Sher Singh ascended the throne on January 20, 1841 all the chiefs excepting the Sandhanwalias made their obeisance to him.<sup>204</sup> The Sandhanwalias were afraid of being penalised because of their opposition to Sher Singh. The new ruler had difficulties from the rank and file of the army. In order to seek their support the Maharaja had promised to raise their salaries. But there was not enough of money in the treasury to satisfy the soldiery. Sher Singh and Dhian Singh had to make strenuous efforts to bring about normalcy. Rani Chand Kaur was first poisoned and then battered with stones on June 9, 1842.<sup>205</sup> Undoubtedly, Sher Singh and Dhian Singh were party to this heinous crime. The Sandhanwalia Sardars murdered Sher Singh, his son Kanwar Partap Singh and Dhian Singh on the same day, September 15, 1843.<sup>206</sup> Within the next twenty four hours, Ajit Singh and Lehna Singh, the Sandhanwalia Sardars, who were the assassins of Sher Singh and others were done to death by Dhian Singh's son Hira Singh with the help of the army. The third leader Attar Singh Sandhanwalia escaped to the British territory.

Prince Duleep Singh, who was just a five year old child at that time, was proclaimed the next Maharaja and Hira Singh was appointed special counsellor or the Prime Minister. Hira Singh's elevation was not liked by his uncle Suchet Singh. Hira Singh's persistent harassment of Princes

201. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 501 ; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

202. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 332 ; Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 38 ; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 502 ; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

203. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 212 ; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 334 ; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 507.

204. Muhammad Naqi Peshawari, *Sher Singh Nama* (1843), ff. 26a-26b, MS., GS., English version published in *Journal of the Panjab University, Historical Society, Lahore*, Vol. VIII, April 1944, p. 107.

205. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, IV, pp. 35-36.

206. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 231 ; Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 335 ; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 418-19.

Kashmira Singh and Peshaura Singh aroused strong feelings against him. A deputation of the army *panchayats* met Hira Singh and asked him to stop the campaign against the above referred to princes and release Rani Jindan's brother, Jawahar Singh. Hira Singh immediately accepted the demand. In the next few months the army *panchayats* renounced their allegiance to Raja Hira Singh who, on the morning of December 22, 1844, secretly left Lahore, accompanied by his adviser Pandit Jalla, on their way to Jammu. They were pursued by Jawahar Singh, Sham Singh Attariwala and Mewa Singh Majithia at the head of the large army, overtaken and killed.<sup>207</sup>

Rani Jindan wanted her brother Jawahar Singh to hold the office of *wazir*. The troops consented to Rani's decision and he was formally installed in the office of the *wazir* on May 14, 1845.<sup>208</sup> The appointment induced Prince Peshaura Singh to revolt against Lahore Durbar and proclaim himself the Maharaja instead of Duleep Singh. Jawahar Singh got Peshaura Singh captured and strangled to death on August 31, 1845.<sup>209</sup> At the news of Peshaura Singh's death Jawahar Singh expressed his joy by ordering the illumination of the city. This annoyed the army which issued orders in the name of the Khalsa summoning the Rani, Maharaja Duleep Singh and Jawahar Singh. On September 21, 1845 they proceeded to the camp of the army. Jawahar Singh was immediately separated from the party and killed.<sup>210</sup> The Rani and her son were allowed to return.

Out of three contestants for the office of the Prime Minister Gulab Singh, Lal Singh and Tej Singh, Lal Singh was appointed the next Prime Minister and Tej Singh became the Commander-in-Chief of the Sikh army.<sup>211</sup> The English were watching the happenings at Lahore Durbar with keen interest. Colonel Wade, Political agent at Ludhiana, while returning through the Punjab after Afghanistan's expedition, collected political and geographical information relating to the Sikh territories.

207. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 344 ; Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-31.

208. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, p. 344 ; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 242 ; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 532.

209. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 244 ; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 437 ; cf. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 347 ; B.R. Chopra, *Kingdom of the Punjab (1839-45)*, Hoshiarpur, 1969, pp. 400-01.

210. Carmichael Smyth, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-50 ; Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 245 ; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, pp. 535-36.

211. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 246 ; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 537 ; B.R. Chopra, *op. cit.*, p. 419.

Many factors led to the First Anglo-Sikh War started in December 1845. Supremacy of the Khalsa army, British campaign of Rani Jindan's vilification, Home Government of British East India Company's pressure to go ahead with the conquest of the Punjab, war preparations of the British and their disregard to the protests of the Lahore Durbar, overtures of Gulab Singh, Broadfoot's claim to the Lahore Durbar's possessions in the cis-Satluj areas, etc., provoked the Sikh forces to meet the challenge of the British.

On December 12, 1845 the Sikhs crossed the Satluj and on December 13, the Governor-General, Lord Hardinge, issued a proclamation announcing war on the Sikhs.<sup>212</sup> On December 18, a battle took place at Mudki, twenty miles from Ferozepur<sup>213</sup> where the British suffered heavy casualties, amounting to 872 killed and wounded. The second action was fought three days later, i.e., on December 21, at Ferozshahr,<sup>214</sup> ten miles from Ferozepur. Lal Singh and Tej Singh joined the English. The British loss was 694 killed and 1721 wounded. Major Broadfoot, the political Agent, was also killed in this battle. The Sikhs lost about 2000 men. The British suffered a severe reverse at Baddowal on January 21, 1846<sup>215</sup> but retrieved their position at the battle of Aliwal, a week later on January 28, 1846.<sup>216</sup> The last battle was fought at Sabraon on 10th February, 1846.<sup>217</sup> Sham Singh Attariwala, a symbol of the unflinching will and valiant spirit of the Khalsa, fell fighting heroically in the foremost ranks. The British emerged victorious.

The Governor-General entered Lahore on February 20, and on March 9, a treaty of peace was concluded between the English and the Lahore Durbar. All territories between the Beas and the Satluj were annexed.<sup>218</sup> The strength of the Sikh army was limited to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry. Kashmir was sold to Gulab Singh to recover war indemnity from the Durbar. On December 16, 1846 a new treaty was signed at

212. Ganda Singh (ed.), *Maharaja Duleep Singh Correspondence*, Patiala, 1977, introduction, p. 38.

213. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 264; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 541.

214. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

215. *Ibid.*, p. 272; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 544.

216. *Ibid.*, p. 275; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 545.

217. *Ibid.*, p. 282; Dewan Ajudhia Parshad, *Waqai-i-Jang-i-Sikhan* (1850), English version published in *Journal of the Panjab University Historical Society*, Vol. VIII, April 1944, p. 88; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 473.

218. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

Bharowal<sup>219</sup> and ratified on December 26. Henry Lawrence was appointed Resident at Lahore, "with full authority to direct and control all matters in every department of the state". This treaty was to remain in operation till Maharaja Duleep Singh attained the age of 16 on 4th September 1854. The Sikhs Sardars resented this gradual liquidation of the sovereignty of the Sikh state. On the night of August 19-20, 1847, Rani Jindan was taken to Sheikhpura where she was interned in the fort.<sup>220</sup>

The new British Government faced a rebellion in the Sikh province of Multan. When Kahn Singh, accompanied by two British officers, Vans Agnew and W.A. Anderson, went to Multan to take charge from Diwan Mool Raj the soldiers rebelled and killed both the English officers.<sup>221</sup> The Multan challenge was deliberately ignored by the Governor-General, under the pretext of the approaching hot weather. The real reason for inaction was the desire of the British to let the insurrection spread so that they could finally resort to a large scale offensive and abrogate the sovereignty of the Sikhs. The British further provoked the Sikhs by existing Rani Jindan to Banaras. Her annual allowance of one and a half lakh of rupees was reduced to twelve thousand and her jewellery worth fifty thousand rupees was forfeited. From Banaras she escaped to Nepal.<sup>222</sup>

Captain James Abbott, who was adviser to Chattar Singh Attariwala, the governor of Hazara, started instigating the Muslim population of the province against the Sikh ruler. Chattar Singh's daughter was engaged to Maharaja Duleep Singh. The Resident of Lahore was requested to fix the date for the royal wedding. The Resident regarded this proposal with disfavour and did not concede the request of the Sardar. Captain Abbott's constant instigation led up to a crisis in Hazara. When the Muslims attacked Chattar Singh, Commandant Canora, an American officer, at Hazara, refused to obey the orders of the Sardar saying that he would take orders only from Abbott. In the fray with the Sikhs Canora was killed. Chattar Singh was forced to relinquish the governorship of Hazara and was deprived of his *jagir*.<sup>223</sup> His son Sher Singh who was a

219. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 556.

220. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 52 ; cf. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, p. 379.

221. Ganesh Das, *op. cit.*, pp. 384-85 ; Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 559 ; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 498.

222. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, pp. 380-81 ; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 504-05 ; Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

223. Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 507-11.



member of the Resident's Council joined his father.<sup>224</sup> The situation suited Lord Dalhousie to carry out his designs of annexing the Punjab. Battles were fought at Ramnagar on November 22, 1848, at Chelianwala on January 13, 1849 and at Gujrat on February 21, 1849.

Chattar Singh and Sher Singh were finally defeated. On March 14, 1849 the Sikh soldiers surrendered at Rawalpindi before Major General Gilbert. Lord Dalhousie proclaimed annexation of the Punjab on March 29, 1849, and young Duleep Singh affixed his signatures to the fatal document which deprived him of his crown and kingdom. He was reduced from a sovereign ruler to an exile, to be at the mercy of the British Government of India and England.

Of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's seven sons Duleep Singh was the youngest, having been born on September 6, 1838. At the time of his father's death he was only two years, five months and twenty four days old. Duleep Singh was in the thirteenth year of his age when he was deprived of his ancestral kingdom.

Dr Sir John Login, a man of kindly disposition and amiable manners, was appointed to look after Duleep Singh. Soon after the young Maharaja was shifted from Lahore to Fatehgarh in the district of Farukhabad in U.P. He was thoroughly surrounded by Christians and he played only with the Christian children. He is said to have himself abandoned the idea of marrying Chattar Singh's daughter. For some time two daughters of the Raja of Coorg were considered for the purpose but later that proposal was also dropped. Duleep Singh was turned against his mother Rani Jindan by Mr. Login and others. He refused to see her. In November 1850 Duleep Singh suddenly announced his desire to embrace Christianity. He was kept on probation for two years and on March 8, 1853, he was admitted into the Christian Church by baptism.<sup>225</sup>

On April 19, 1854 the young Maharaja sailed from Calcutta for England where he was given the honour due to a Maharaja. Soon after his arrival in London the Maharaja was given a special audience by the Queen and her husband Prince Albert.<sup>226</sup> When he visited Rome, he was honoured by the Pope.

When mutiny broke out in India in 1857 he showed no sympathy for the mutineers, nor any ambition for the recapture of his position as

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224. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

225. Logan, Lady, *Sir John Logan and Duleep Singh*, London, 1890, pp. 297, 303-06.

226. Ganda Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84.

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a king. In 1861 he came to India to take his mother to England, where both the son and the mother were kept apart. She died on August 1, 1863. Her dead body was allowed to be brought to India but the funeral rites of his mother were performed in the Bomaby state under orders of the government and her ashes thrown in the Narbada river. He was not allowed to bring her body to the Punjab lest there be a wave of sympathy for Duleep Singh.

On his return from India he married, on June 7, 1864, Bamba Muller, the daughter of a German merchant Ludwig Muller stationed at Cairo. She produced six children...three sons and three daughters. On March 25, 1886 Duleep Singh addressed a letter to his countrymen expressing his desire to come to his land and become a Sikh again. When he was on his way to India he was arrested at Aden on April 21, 1886 by the orders of the viceroy, Lord Dufferin.<sup>227</sup> His wife returned to England with her children. She died on September 18, 1887. The Maharaja went to France, where with the help of the French government, he unsuccessfully tried to reach Pondicherry, the French colony in India. He, then, went to Russia from where he addressed a letter to Indian newspapers, which was published in October 1887, appealing to his countrymen to contribute one pice per person, a month, and the Punjabis to contribute one anna each, to help him to fight for his throne in the Punjab. But his plan fizzled out. He returned to France on November 3, 1888 and married on May 21, 1889, an English lady, Ada Douglas Wetherill. Despite the royal pardon to return to his family and home in England he continued to stay in a hotel in Paris. Duleep Singh died on October 22, 1893. poor and destitute, the former Maharaja of the Punjab. His body was removed to England by his son Prince Victor and laid to rest in the church-yard of Elveden Hall. All his children died issueless and the Sikh royalty which Maharaja Ranjit Singh had established with great toil and statemanship came to an end but not without a flicker that momentarily burnt in Duleep Singh's heart to show the path to freedom.

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227. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

## Bibi Kaulan in Sikh Chronicles

D.S. DHILLON\* & BALJINDER SINGH\*\*

The association of Bibi Kaulan, a disciple of Guru Hargobind, the sixth master of the Sikhs, with the Guru has greatly suffered at the hands of Punjabi poets turned into historians who have allowed the fullest play to their imagination, while narrating the fanciful narration of rumours connected with the Guru and his relation with Bibi Kaulan. Bibi Kaulan, an important and well respected woman in Sikh history, spent a number of years of her life and died under the spiritual guidance of Guru Hargobind. The holy tank of Kaulsar at Amritsar was erected in her memory. This tank speaks volumes about the respect and honour which she has acquired in Sikh history, culture and traditions. It is very important to note that there have been a great number of saintly Sikh women, some of whom figured in Sikh history and others belonged to the Guru's household but no such monument was constructed in the memory of these women.<sup>1</sup> Kaulan's reverence and devotion to the Sikh faith is remarkable.

Contemporary and reliable sources about the birth and early life of Kaulan are very rare and scanty. However, *Sikhan Di Bhagat Mala*, *Gurparnalian*, *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, the later Sikh sources like *Gurpartap Suraj Granth*, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, give some detail about her life. But some of the other chronicles such as *Mahima Parkash*, *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* of Zulifkar Ardistani, a contemporary of Guru Hargobind, make no mention of Bibi Kaulan.

Different versions are recorded in the Sikh chronicles about the early life of Kaulan. It is said that her childhood name was Fatima and her father's name was Rustam Khan, a Qazi of Lahore. However, later on she embraced the Sikh faith and came to be known with the name of Kaulan.<sup>2</sup> In her early life she was deeply religious and became the

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\*Reader, Department of History, Punjabi University, Patiala,

\*\*Research Fellow, Department of History, Punjabi University, Patiala.

1. Trilochan Singh, *Guru Tegh Bahadur : Prophet and Martyr*, Delhi, 1967, p. 32.
2. Sohan Kavi, *Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin*, ed. Inder Singh Gill, Amritsar, 1968, pp. 198-99.

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disciple of Saint Mian Mir, who lived at Lahore at that time. Mian Mir who belonged to a Qadriya Sufi sect, inspired her to give up all thoughts of wordly life and lead the life of a Sufi Saint.<sup>3</sup> According to Sikh records Guru Hargobind, after his release from Gwalior, came at Lahore to meet this Saint Mian Mir. It is said that when the Guru reached Lahore, Mian Mir went forth to meet him, entertained him in his house and treated him with great respect.<sup>4</sup> Here at Lahore, Guru Hargobind and Mian Mir got engaged in spiritual discourses. Their conversation deeply influenced the disciples of Mian Mir. Fatima (Bibi Kaulan) who happened to be there at the *Khangah* of Mian Mir became an ardent follower of Sikhism.<sup>5</sup> Kaulan started taking deep interest in reciting and reading the compositions of the Sikh Gurus.<sup>6</sup> Even before this, she had occupied her mind with praising God's name and always lived in the company of saints. She declined her parent's suggestion to marry.<sup>7</sup> The Qazi, her father was perturbed to see his daughter's refusal for marriage. Moreover, he did not like Kaulan's inclination towards Sikhism. It is said that the Qazi alongwith the help of other Qazis issued *fatwah* (Royal order) condemning her to death for her sin of transgressing the Mohammadan law.<sup>8</sup> Kaulan's mother on hearing this decision informed not only to her daughter, but also to Mian Mir. Mian Mir decided to send her to Amritsar under the spiritual guidance of Guru Hargobind. Thus, Kaulan set out for Amritsar.

To commemorate her devotion and true regard for Sikh doctrines, the Guru got dug a tank named Kaulsar. According to another version, which seems to be more authentic, the cause of the construction of this tank was that one day Kaulan gave all her jewells to Guru Hargobind with the request to get a monument raised to perpetuate her attachment with the Sikh faith.<sup>9</sup> The Guru granted her request and got a *sarover* (tank) dug on the site where she lived to immortalize her name. The construction of the tank was started on 1681 BK (1624 A.D.) and com-

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3. Giani Gian Singh, *Twarikh Guru Khalsa*, Patiala, 1970, reprint, p. 433.

4. M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vols. 3-4, New Delhi, 1963, p. 41.

5. Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 433.

6. *Ibid.*

7. M.A. Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Santokh Singh, *Sri Gur Partap Suraj Granth*, ed. by Bhai Vir Singh, Amritsar, 1928-37, p. 2739.

pleted in 1684 BK (1627 A.D.).<sup>10</sup> Baba Buddha supervised the construction of the tank. After the tank was constructed, it became customary with the devotees to take a dip first in the Kaulsar *sarover* and then in the holy tank of Golden Temple.<sup>11</sup> By this way the Sikhs enhanced the prestige of Kaulsar tank and immortalised the name of Kaulan.

In her last days Kaulan shifted to Kartarpur Sahib. At Kartarpur she became sick. The Guru received a message about her illness and went to Kartarpur. Kaulan breathed her last in Sawan 5, Samat 1686 BK (July 4, 1629) at Kartarpur. Her mortal remains enshrine in a *samadh* at Kiratpur.

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10. *Report Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, 1930*, p. 290; Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

11. *Ibid.*

## Adina Beg's Role in the Sikh Struggle (upto May 1757)

DR HARPREET KAUR\*

In the eighteenth century the great empire of the Mughals, after a glorious career of nearly two centuries, had fallen into a gradual process of decay. The Mughal Emperors were losing their power and prestige with headlong precipitation while their ministers and supporters indulged in murder, Emperor-blinding, treachery and rapine and always ready to sacrifice the interests of the empire for their own selfish ends. The Mughal viceroys of provinces were generally sunk in sloth and were free from restraint or interference by the central government. A series of foreign invasions from the north-west aggravated the confusion. Such a chaotic state offered great prize to the able and ambitious persons. Adina Beg Khan was one of such persons.<sup>1</sup> In diplomacy and intrigue, in winning friends and in promoting his own rise from an unlettered domestic servant to the viceroyalty of the Punjab Adina Beg Khan stands unrivalled in the history of this province. He started his public career in early twenties of the eighteenth century and it came to a close in 1758. During his public career he served under six governors—Zakariya Khan, Abdullah Khan, Yahiya Khan, Shah Nawaz Khan, Muin-ul-Mulk and Mughlani Begum. He saw, Nadir Shah's invasion, four campaigns of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Maratha conquest of the Punjab and the rise of the Sikhs to political power.

During this period the Sikhs were in the thick of their struggle for independence. Adina Beg Khan, generally being in the Jullundur Doab, close to the field of Sikh operation, was invariably always required to proceed against them. While dealing with the Sikhs he never lost sight of his personal interest of remaining indispensable and always in demand for restraining the Sikhs from their activities.

Adina Beg Khan did not belong to a renowned family nor was he brought up with a silver spoon in his mouth. He rose from obscurity into the full blaze of historical renown in the eighteenth century Punjab.

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\*Lecturer, Post Graduate Department of History, Govt. Mohindra College, Patiala.

1. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1978, p. 317.

He was born to very poor parents, at the village of Sharakpur, near Lahore. His father named Channu was an Arain by caste.<sup>2</sup> He was brought up in a Mughal family and he often spent his time at Jallalabad, Khanpur and Bajwara situated in Jullundur Doab. On account of an extreme poverty he adopted a soldier's occupation and was employed as a tax-gatherer of the village of Jowall commonly known by the name of Kang in the Lohian area of Jullundur Doab. He was an able man, very good at accounts. He displayed great energy, courage and force of character in the performance of his new duties.<sup>3</sup>

He was strong, stoutly built and a tall man. After some years Adina Beg succeeded by means of security from Lala Sri Niwas Dheer, a banker of Sultanpur, to contract five or six villages in the territory of Kang. In the next year all the villages of Kang area came under his charge.<sup>4</sup>

Adina Beg regularly deposited his revenues. The district officer was deeply impressed by his loyalty and ability that he sometimes deputed him to Lahore to deposit the district revenues with provincial treasury. Thus Adina Beg got opportunities to gain influence in the court of Lahore.<sup>5</sup>

When the district officer of Sultanpur died Adina Beg Khan went to Lahore to have an interview with Nawab Zakariya Khan who was deeply impressed by his demeanour. He was appointed to the post of the district officer of Sultanpur in 1739. Adina Beg appointed Sri Niwas his immediate assistant and his elder brother Bhawani Das, who could read and write Persian, as the superintendent of his office.<sup>6</sup>

During his invasion of India in 1739 Nadir Shah plundered Sultanpur but Adina Beg's active measures did not allow the invader to do as much harm to the areas under his care as to the other territories.<sup>7</sup> The confusion caused by the Persian invasion provided opportunity to the Sikhs to assert themselves more strongly. The Sikhs relieved the invaders of the burden of their booty on their return march and also got hundreds of captives—men and women—liberated from their hands.

After the retirement of Nadir Shah from India Adina Beg whole-

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2. *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg Khan*, MS. (Dr Ganda Singh collection) (hereafter GS) (English version), p. 1.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

### ADINA BEG'S ROLE IN THE SIKH STRUGGLE

heartedly engaged himself in the reconstruction of his district and as a result, normalcy was restored to it and he began to be appreciated in all quarters.

Zakariya Khan was in search of a suitable man who should restore order in the Jullundur Doab which was the worst victim of Nadir Shah's troops. Zakariya Khan knew that Adina Beg, besides being active and energetic, had the personal knowledge of the Doab. So he was promoted to the high rank of *nazim* of the Jullundur Doab in 1739 and was entrusted with the task of chastising the Sikhs.<sup>8</sup>

He was more of a diplomat than an administrator particularly in dealing with the Sikhs. In the words of Bakht Mal :

Adina Beg was passionately greedy. He did not crush the Sikhs, although he could do it, if he so intended. He felt that if he quelled the Sikhs some other tax-farmer might be entrusted with the government of the Doab for a higher sum and he might be deprived of his post. This attitude of Adina Beg helped the Sikhs to grow stronger and they gradually occupied many villages as *jagirs*.<sup>9</sup>

The same view is confirmed by James Browne who wrote about Adina Beg in the late eighties of the eighteenth century :

The force he had with him was fully equal to the execution of that service, but Adina Beg considering that if he should entirely put an end to all disturbances in that district, there would remain no necessity for continuing him in so extensive a command, carried on intrigues with the chiefs of the Sikhs, and secretly encouraged them to continue their depredations, at the same time pretending to be very desirous of subduing them. From this management the Sikhs became daily more powerfull and seized upon several places in distant parts of the *suba* of Lahore. They also began to perform public pilgrimages to the holy tank at Amritsar without molestation.<sup>10</sup>

Zakariya Khan was very keen to drive the Sikhs out of his province. Adina Beg asked the Sikhs to vacate the territory. The Sikhs deputed Jassa Singh Thoka (Ramgarhia) to settle terms with Adina Beg. He had

8. Ghulam Husain, *Seir-ul-Mutakherin*, Vol. I (1782), Calcutta, 1902, p. 274; Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 320-21.

9. Bakht Mal, *Khalsa Nama*, MS. (Punjabi University, Patiala) (hereafter PUP), p. 29.

10. James Browne, *India Tracts*, II, London, 1788, p. 14; cf. *The Jullundur District Gazetteer*, 1904, p. 29.



not begun to be called Ramgarhia as yet. Adina Beg proved too clever for the Sikh *vakil* and succeeded in enlisting the services of Ramgarhia Sardar. The Sikhs were shocked at the conduct of their envoy and they moved over to the Sirhind division of Delhi province where they created a serious situation for the imperial government.<sup>11</sup>

For some time things moved on smoothly but then Adina Beg fell on bad days. Zakariya Khan was hard-pressed by financial difficulties. He imprisoned Diwan Lakhpat Rai and his brother Jaspat Rai for their failure to make payments to his troops. The Diwan's brother Jaspat Rai secured the release of his brother and himself on the promise of disbursing payments to the army. Orders of the Nawab were secured to get the accounts of the revenue officers checked. Adina Beg was also called upon to render accounts of the revenue collected by him. His deposits in the treasury were also short of the collections made by him. Adina Beg unsuccessfully tried to approach Diwan Lakhpat Rai to explain his position. Adina Beg, along with his assistants Bhawani Das Chaudhary and Nidhan Singh, resident of a village near Batala, was ordered to be imprisoned for one year.<sup>12</sup>

After the lapse of the period of his confinement Bhawani Das, on the security of Lala Sri Niwas got Adina Beg released, and took upon himself the responsibility of clearing the arrears. While in prison Adina Beg suffered much trouble and to save being involved again in such difficulties he left the city at night and fled towards the hills of Jowall. Bhawani Das, who was instrumental in the deliverance of Adina Beg, incurred the displeasure of Diwan Lakhpat Rai. Bhawani Das was tortured but he did not disclose Adina's income and said, "You may do whatever you like to do with me. Without the presence of my master I will tell nothing."<sup>13</sup>

Soon afterwards Adina Beg was called to the court and the Nawab bestowed upon him a robe of honour, and ordered him to return to his previous station. Though Adina Beg was happy over his reappointment but he always nursed in his heart fears from the Nawab.<sup>14</sup>

11. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, I (1854), Lahore, 1961, p. 304; Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, I, Calcutta, 1934, pp. 422-23; Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, II, Patiala, reprint, 1970 p. 234; Suraj Singh and Darbara Singh, *Ithas-i-Ramgarhian*, Lahore, 1915, pp. 410-11.

12. *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg*, pp. 4-5.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

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After the death of Zakariya Khan in July 1745 Adina Beg Khan found himself placed politically under Yahiya Khan who had no control over his younger brother Shah Nawaz Khan. In order to maintain his sway over the Jullundur Doab which was the most fertile part of the Punjab, Yahiya Khan treated Adina Beg Khan with great consideration. Adina Beg played his part so cautiously and consummately that he won the trust of Yahiya Khan, retaining at the same time the confidence of Shah Nawaz Khan, though the brothers were hostile to each other. Adina Beg gave proof of his loyalty by persecuting the Sikhs from April to June 1746.<sup>15</sup> Adina Beg was suspected of not being adequately oppressive in respect of the Sikhs. The suspicion was correct. It was not due to any regard or respect for them, but only to safeguard his personal interests. When his anti-Sikh stance needed to be tested he would not hesitate to be cruel to them.

Ultimately when Adina Beg saw the scales turning against Yahiya Khan, he openly sided with Shah Nawaz Khan. He led an attack against Yahiya Khan at Lahore in March 1747, winning him a victory. Yahiya Khan was captured and Shah Nawaz Khan became the governor of Lahore. Now Shah Nawaz Khan entrusted a complete charge of Jullundur Doab to Adina Beg.<sup>16</sup>

The *wazir* of Delhi was utterly disappointed at these developments at Lahore. Yahiya Khan managed to escape to Delhi. Shah Nawaz felt extremely perturbed and felt sure that the retribution of the Emperor and his *wazir* must fall upon him. At this juncture, Adina Beg advised Shah Nawaz Khan to communicate with Ahmad Shah Abdali. In the words of Sayid Ghulam Husain, "The adviser of the young viceroy at this time was Adina Beg Khan, who was a devil under the appearance of man. He was resolved to upset his master's power and to raise his own on its ruins."<sup>17</sup> Accordingly Shah Nawaz Khan sent his envoy to Ahmad Shah with the message 'Crown to Ahmad Shah and wazirship to Shah Nawaz.' Adina Beg, on the other hand, showed no compunction in stabbing his master in the back. He informed the *wazir* of the secret correspondence between Shah Nawaz Khan and Ahmad Shah saying, "that his nephew had become very headstrong, had entered into

15. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, Amritsar, 1914, pp. 389-90.

16. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, I, Lahore, 1885, pp. 113-14; Khushwaqat Rai, *Tawarikh-i-Sikhan* (1811), MS., GS., p. 50; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 200.

17. Ghulam Husain, *op. cit.*, III, p. 16.

correspondence with Ahmad Shah and paid no attention to the words of his best servants."<sup>18</sup>

The *wazir* was very much perturbed at this news and he at once wrote in his own hand to Shah Nawaz Khan a personal conciliatory and affectionate letter purporting not to stoop to obey an Afghan, personal attendant of Nadir Shah. He should rather drive out this insignificant fellow from the frontiers of Hindustan. This letter reversed the situation as it touched Shah Nawaz Khan's pride. He at once changed his mind, and, unmindful of the negotiations with Ahmad Shah, decided to throw in his lot with his traditional masters in opposition to the Durrani.<sup>19</sup>

The Durrani chief reached Lahore on January 8, 1748 and on the 11th January a fierce contest took place between the forces of Abdali and Shah Nawaz Khan. Shah Nawaz was defeated and he fled to Delhi. Adina Beg Khan accompanied him. Mir Mannu defeated Ahmad Shah Abdali's army which fled back to Afghanistan. Adina Beg Khan, who was in close attendance on Mir Mannu, received two bullet-wounds in the battle of Manupur.<sup>20</sup> After assuming the governorship of Lahore Mir Mannu confirmed Adina Beg Khan in the *faujdari* of the Jullundur Doab.

Mir Mannu gave strict instructions to Adina Beg to curb the power of the Sikhs who had become supreme in the northern hilly portions of the Doab. Muin found absolute anarchy prevailing every where in the province for which the Sikhs were chiefly responsible. Haro Singh and Karora Singh in the Sirhind territory, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia in the Jullundur Doab, Lajja Singh and Hari Singh in the Bari Doab and Charhat Singh in the Rachna Doab, were creating disturbances.<sup>21</sup> Adina Beg had to be active against the Sikhs, although in his heart of hearts he never wished a complete break off with them whom he planned to use for the fulfilment of his own designs. In the words of Browne, "He began, as formerly, to intrigue with the Sicks (Sikhs) and took no effectual means to suppress them."<sup>22</sup> Even then willy nilly he had to lead an expedition against them and in the engagements which followed,

18. Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 61; Tahmas Khan, *Tahmas Nama* (1779), English tr. by Setu Madhava Rao, Bombay, 1967, p. 8; Ghulam Husain, *op. cit.*, III, p. 17; Ali-ud Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 201; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, II, p. 160.

19. Ghulam Husain, *op. cit.*, III, p. 17; Anand Ram Mukhlis, *Tazkira*, MS., PUP., pp. 235-36; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 202.

20. Anand Ram Mukhlis, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

21. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 127-28.

22. Browne, *op. cit.*, II, p. 16.

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both the parties lost heavily. In view of the superior number of the Sikh forces, Adina Beg had to give up the struggle against them. Due to the ensuing rainy season further operations had to be suspended.

The Sikhs put their five hundred men in the fort of Ram Rauni. Mir Mannu ordered Adina Beg Khan to march against them. Adina Beg blockaded Ram Rauni. The Sikhs, occasionally, sallied out and created a havoc in Adina's ranks. The Sikh garrison continued dwindling and under these critical circumstances they sent a word to Jassa Singh Thoka who was in the employ of Adina Beg to help them and if he did not render any help he would be ostracized and never readmitted into the fold of the Sikh church. Jassa Singh, in consideration of his coreligionist, deserted Adina Beg and entered the fort at night.<sup>23</sup> Through Kaura Mal, Jassa Singh got the siege lifted, to the chagrin of Adina Beg who could not tolerate Kaura Mal at the Lahore court. Kaura Mal was a formidable personality and superior to Adina Beg in diplomacy and political tact. Adina Beg dissented saying, "Goodness to evil-doers is doing evil to good people." These remarks cut no ice with Mir Mannu, and he endorsed the advice of Kaura Mal,

When Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India for the third time in December 1751 and besieged Lahore, Mir Mannu called a meeting of the war council. Kaura Mal was against immediate action but Muin accepted Adina Beg's suggestion for prompt attack on the Afghans.

Kaura Mal was killed in the battlefield by a person of his own side.<sup>24</sup> It seems quite probable that Adina Beg, if not directly, was responsible of his death in an indirect manner. Just at this time a Durrani marched forward and cutting off Diwan's head carried it away. Shortly after, Mannu surrendered and Ahmad Shah Durrani pardoned him and confirmed him as the governor of Lahore.

Now Mir Mannu got free to deal with the Sikhs more firmly. He deputed Adina Beg Khan and Sadiq Beg Khan to punish the Sikhs in Jullundur Doab where they had returned from Hissar. Adina Beg Khan hailed this opportunity, in order to wash away the suspicions attached to his treachery at Lahore during the time of Durrani's third invasion.<sup>25</sup> These commanders entered the Jullundur Doab in pursuit of the Sikhs. They received intelligence about the assembling of the Sikhs near

23. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Punth Parkash*, (1939) pp. 311-15; Khushwaqat Rai, *op. cit.*, p. 53; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, I, p. 129.

24. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I p. 210; *Anwal-i-Adina Beg*. MS., GS., p. 8.

25. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 113.

Makhawal, probably to celebrate the *Baisakhi* festival at Anandpur. The Sikhs were taken quite unawares as they were engrossed in festivities and a large number of them were put to swords. But such was their hardihood and doggedness that soon after they began to organise themselves and assert. Malcolm blames Adina Beg for the Sikh activities.<sup>26</sup> To keep Mir Mannu in good humour Adina Beg would send 40 to 50 Sikh captives from the Jullundur Doab who were killed with wooden hammers at Shahid Ganj, Lahore.<sup>27</sup> In 1752 Adina Beg established a town at a place 16 kms north of Gurdaspur on the Hasli canal or Shah Nahar named after him as Adinapur or Adinanagar.<sup>28</sup>

After Mir Mannu's death, governors changed hands in quick succession. Adina Beg took advantage of the situation and established his independence in Jullundur Doab owing his allegiance neither to Delhi nor to Kabul. He increased his resources and maintained peace in the territory under his charge.

Adina Beg took advantage of the unrest prevailing in the provincial capital. He marched upon Lahore towards the end of 1755, drove away Abdullah and appointed Sadiq Beg Khan, his deputy, to manage the state affairs.<sup>29</sup>

On Mughlani Begum's request to Ahmad Shah Abdali for help the latter sent Jahan Khan with two contingents to Lahore. Sadiq Beg fled to Sirhind and the Begum was restored to the *subedari* of Lahore with Khawaja Abdullah as her deputy. In the meantime, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, "was engaged in perpetual contest with Adina Beg Khan with varying success ; but in November 1755, he gained a decided advantage at Khadar, and compelled the Khan to cede to him Fatahabad on the Beas."<sup>30</sup>

The *wazir* of Delhi Imad-ul-Mulk, appointed Adina Beg as the governor of Lahore and Multan on an annual tribute of thirty lakh rupees and appointed Sayid Jamil-ud-Din as Adina Beg's assistant. The *wazir*, thereafter, left his camp at Sirhind, for the imperial capital on May 9, 1756, arriving there on July 19, 1756.<sup>31</sup> Sayid Jamil Khan administered

26. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, p. 92; Forster, *Travels*, I, p. 314.

27. Tahmas Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

28. *Ahwal-i-Adina Beg*, p. 22; *Gurdaspur Gazetteer* (1891), p. 26.

29. Tahmas Khan, *Tahmas Nama* (1779), pp. 30-31.

30. Griffin, *Rajas of the Punjab*, Lahore, 1870, p. 458.

31. Tahmas Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 38 ; Ghulam Ali Azad, *Khazna-i-Amira* (1762-63);  
[Continued on page 57]

#### ADINA BEG'S ROLE IN THE SIKH STRUGGLE

the province well but his rule was short. Mughlani Begum did not receive good treatment at the hands of the *wazir* of Delhi. She addressed some secret letters to Ahmad Shah Abdali, inviting him to attack India, who agreed. He reached Peshawar in November 1756.<sup>32</sup> None offered any resistance to him. Adina Beg Khan fled to the waterless tract of Hansi and Hissar.<sup>33</sup> The Sikhs had the best opportunity to punish the people of the Doab who had often helped Adina Beg against them.<sup>34</sup>

After some time Adina Beg returned to the hills<sup>35</sup> in Hoshiarpur district in the region of Garli in Bharwain. Ahmad Shah Abdali, while on his march to Delhi, was preyed upon by the Sikhs. The baggage of the Afghans was plundered. Ahmad Shah's son Timur Shah was also robbed as is testified by a Maratha despatch dated March 1757. It reads :

At the end of March 1757 when the front division of the Abdali's army under Prince Timur was transporting the plundered wealth of Delhi to Lahore, Ala Singh, in concert with other Sikhs had barred his path at Sanaur (near Patiala) and robbed him of half of his treasures and again attacked and plundered him at Malerkotla. So great had been the success of these brigands that rumours had magnified it into the prince's captivity and even death at their hands.<sup>36</sup>

So the Durrani were strongly exercised against the Sikhs. Jahan Khan, from religious zeal, destroyed and polluted the places of worship of the Sikhs at Amritsar.

The vigorous fanatical outrages committed by Jahan Khan on the Sikhs were deeply resented by them. With a view to increasing their power the Sikhs retired to the Shivalik hills in the north of Hoshiarpur where they concerted a plan of action in which they were soon joined by Adina Beg Khan.

*Continued from page 56]*

Caunpore, 1900, p. 52 ; *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani*, English version by Jadunath Sarkar, MS., G. S., pp. 69-70, 75 ; *Delhi Chronicle*, MS., G.S., news dated 19 July 1756, p. 52 ; Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 139-40 ; Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op. cit.*, I, p. 215 ; Jadunath Sarkar, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 60-61.

32. Jadunath Sarkar, *Fall of the Maghal Empire*; II. (1934), p. 127.

33. Ghulam Ali Azad, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

34. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 131.

35. cf., Forster, *A Journey from Bengal to England* (1798), Patiala reprint, 1970, p. 317.

36. V.K. Rajwade, *Marathyanahya Itihaschin Sadhane*, Vol. I, p. 85.

Adina Beg's refusal to attend Timur's court at Lahore was visited by strong action against him by the Lahore government. He was assisted by the Sikhs. To reward the Sikhs for their help Adina Beg Khan paid them a lakh and a quarter of rupees as *rakhi* or protection money for the Jullundur Doab. To ingratiate himself further with them, he acknowledged himself to be a sort of round-head Sikh, and brought *karah parsad* (community sweet pudding) worth a thousand rupees to be distributed among them. Adina Beg Khan, from the fear of Jahan Khan took refuge in the impenetrable retreats of Nalagarh hills and Jahan Khan appointed Sarfraz Khan to the *faujdari* of the Jullundur Doab.<sup>37</sup>

Tahmas Khan, an eye witness, writes that the Sikhs wreaked their majice on Jahan Khan. They attacked the Afghans everywhere. Even the environs of Lahore were not safe. Every night thousands of Sikhs used to fall upon the city and plundered the suburbs lying outside the walls, but no force was sent out to repel them and the city gates were closed one hour after nightfall. The government of the province was paralysed.<sup>38</sup> Bakht Mal writes, "thousands of Sikhs in a body trampled down Lahore from one end to the other under the hoofs of their horses, and allowed none to escape unscathed."<sup>39</sup>

A Marathi despatch says :

The Sikhs gathered together, by our (i.e. Maratha) advice, began to upset Abdali's rule ; from some places they expelled his outposts. They defeated Sadat Khan Afridi, plundered all the Jullundur Doab, and forced him to flee to the hills. By order of the subedar Khwaja Ubaid Khan came from Lahore with 20,000 horse and foot to fight the Sikhs. In the end he was defeated, many of his captains were slain, all his camp and baggage were plundered, all the artillery left behind by Abdali was captured.<sup>40</sup>

Adina Beg's fear from the Afghans left the Sikhs unmolested by him. They utilised this opportunity for allowing no rest to the Afghans. They came down from the hills and spread in all directions aggravating the chaos in the Doab. To confront the Afghans Adina Beg felt the need of the Sikh help which was readily offered by them.

37. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 140 ; Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Bombay, 1950, p. 157 ; Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 178.

38. Tahmas Khan, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

39. Bakht Mal, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

40. *Selections from Peshwa Daftar*, II, p. 83; Jadunath Sarkar, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 69-70.

#### ADINA BEG'S ROLE IN THE SIKH STRUGGLE

The Sikhs helped Adina Beg against the Afghans not because they had accepted Adina's bid to occupy the Punjab as his legitimate claim but they did it with a view to defeating the stronger enemies—the Afghans, who were trying to consolidate their possession of the Punjab. The Sikhs felt that after they were able to deal squarely with the Durrani Adina Beg would not be able to stand before them. Marathas would also find it hot for them to stay on in the Punjab in the face of the growing power of the Sikhs. So the Sikhs co-operated with Adina Beg and the Marathas who had jointly planned to drive the Afghans out of the Punjab. Thus, the triune immediately expelled the Afghans from the Punjab. Adina Beg died soon after and the Marathas also melted away in a short time.



# The Kingdom of Lahore in the 1830's

KULWINDER SINGH BAJWA\*

By the end of the third decade of the nineteenth century, the kingdom of Lahore was at the zenith of its glory. The work of consolidation was almost complete. All the civil and military institutions, whether innovated or revived, were functioning well. The might of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was felt all around. He was, by this time, thinking to have control over Sind. At the same time, the East India Company, which had practically controlled the whole of India, was thinking to acquire 'the natural line' of defence—the Indus. To fulfil this task, Alexander Burnes was deputed, professedly, on a complimentary mission to Lahore.<sup>1</sup> In reality, he was ordered to collect sufficient information not only about the land and water routes but also about the power and attitude of the people and rulers of different countries occupying this region towards the British government.<sup>2</sup> Under such a specific scheme of the British government for conducting a survey of political and geographical nature, the kingdom of Lahore received Burnes' attention because of its power and strategic importance. The purview of this paper is to analyse Burnes' observations on the state of the kingdom of Lahore as it existed in the 1830s.

Burnes' objective to know the power of the kingdom of Lahore, made him interested in the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He considered it one of the instruments which enabled the Maharaja to conquer and maintain such a powerful kingdom. According to Alexander Burne's account, the regular infantry, cavalry and artillery amounted to 25,000, 5000, and 150 guns respectively.<sup>3</sup>

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\*Research Associate, Department of History, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

1. Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara : Being the account of a journey from India to Cabool, Tartary, and Persia*, also, *narrative of Voyage on the Indus from sea to Lahore*. . . , 3 Vols., O.U.P., Karachi (4th ed.) (cited hereafter as *Travels*), Vol. I, viii—ix ; *The Dictionary of National Biography* (ed.). Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, London, 1917, Vol. III, p. 389 ; Syad Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, New Delhi, 1964, p. 443.
2. Burnes, *Travels*, I, preface, III, ix-xi, Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 444.
3. Burnes, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 286-87; III, p. 296.

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Five regiments of regular infantry were paraded before Alexander Burnes.<sup>4</sup> It was trained as a European infantry. Its contingents were 'fully equal' to the troops of the East India Company. They were well accoutred and manoeuvred with regularity and precision. However, they were destitute of the most essential quality of a soldier, i.e., discipline.<sup>5</sup> Burnes suggested two measures to improve this short-coming : (i) by increasing the power of the native officers, (ii) by removing a just ground of discontentment which arose from the inequality of pay of the individuals of the same rank.<sup>6</sup> Without commission, these men did not possess a respect for themselves, nor were they respected by their soldiers.<sup>7</sup> The dress of the contingents of the regular infantry was white, with black cross belts. They bore muskets which were the manufactures of Kashmir or Lahore and had a cost of Rs. 17 per piece. There was a curious mixture of Hindustanis and Sikhs in every corps. The words of command were given in French.<sup>8</sup>

Burnes had a very high opinion of the Maharaja's artillery but not of the cavalry.<sup>9</sup> The guns were well cost and the carriages were in good repair. The guns were made at Lahore costing the state Rs. 1,000 each.<sup>10</sup> However, the horses and equipment were inferior. The—average cost of a gun was 5,000 rupees. This sum included the pay of the officers and men and up keep of the horses. The Maharaja had hundred pieces of field artillery, exclusive of battering guns and mortars.<sup>11</sup> He evinced a keen interest in shell practice. But his army was unacquainted with the mode of fusing iron and the shells were constructed of brass.<sup>12</sup>

The irregular troops consisting of cavalry fell little short of 50,000 men. They were denominated as *ghorcharhas*, meaning horsemen. As a

4. *Ibid.*, III, p. 156.

5. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 286-87 ; III, pp. 102, 155-56, 296-297.

6. *Ibid.*, II, p. 287.

7. *Loc. cit.*

8. *Ibid.*, III, pp. 102, 155-56.

9. Burnes inspected a train of fifty one pieces of artillery. They were brass 6-pounds each drawn by six horses. These were commanded by a native officer who put them through the movements of horse artillery, and formed line and column in every direction. The evolution was not rapidly performed ; but the celerity was considerable ; and no accident in over-turning or firing occurred throughout the morning, *Travels*, III, p. 165.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, III, pp. 156, 165-66.

12. *Ibid.*, I, p. 16.

native soldiery, they were an efficient, well mounted and serviceable body. However, they were superior to their neighbouring enemy—the Afghans.<sup>13</sup> A regular muster of these forces was exacted, with a few favoured exceptions. The *ghorcharahs* were paid by assignment of land.<sup>14</sup>

The pay of the regular troops of the Maharaja was higher than that of the Company's troops.<sup>15</sup> Sometimes, but surely not regularly, the officers were paid in Kashmir shawls.<sup>16</sup> The troopers of the regular army were clothed by the State. The Sikh portion lived in messes and was supplied food at a deduction of two rupees a month for each man.<sup>17</sup> However, the irregularity of payments had caused unrest in the army.<sup>18</sup> For this inattention of the Maharaja towards his army, Burnes has given two reasons which do not with-stand the facts—For instance, the Maharaja's growing friendship with the British Government and 'the increasing avarice of age.'<sup>19</sup>

Burnes entertained doubts that if some change for the better did not take place in the administration of the army, the regular forces of the Punjab would either get in 'a state of mutiny or they would be greatly diminished.'<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, he doubted the viability of the system too. The new system was strongly disliked by the Sikh Sardars.<sup>21</sup> 'The French officers,' observed Burnes, 'when deprived of their patron, would

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13. The superiority of the Sikh cavalry men consisted in being easily rallied ; while the Afghans terminated a battle with the first discomfiture, Burnes, *op. cit.*, II, p. 287.
  14. *Loc. cit.*
  15. *Loc. cit.*
  16. Maharaja Ranjit Singh told Burnes : 'As I have a chief, who may be entitled to a balance of 300 rupees, shawls to the value of 500, he is well pleased,' *Travels*, III, p. 164.
  17. *Ibid.*, II, p. 287.
  18. Burnes has mentioned that the garrison at the fort of Attock had mutinied because of the arrears of pay, *Travels*, I, p. 78.
  19. *Ibid.*, II, p. 288 ; Burne's assumption is wrong. The system of keeping the army in arrears had long been known to India, and the Maharaja had followed his predecessors in this instance to ensure the fidelity of the troops. Notwithstanding the system of arrears, payment was made more or less, regularly, after every two months. Fauja Singh, *Military System of the Sikhs*, Delhi, 1964, pp. 166-67.
  20. Burnes, *op. cit.*, II, p. 288.
  21. Burnes observed that the Maharaja had a disciplined army consisting of infantry, with due proportion of cavalry and artillery, but the system was unpopular in the country, and 'the Sikh Sardars viewed with distrust the innovation and uncgvator,' *Travels*, III, p. 296.

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find it necessary to stand aloof from motives of personal safety; and if they left the country, the wreck of their labour would soon perish in the general tumult.<sup>22</sup>

After consolidating his conquests, Maharaja Ranjit Singh implied his mind to those improvements which spring only from great minds. He evolved a system of government 'far beyond the native institutions of the East, though far from the civilization of Europe.' His despotism was benevolent.<sup>23</sup> However, Burnes was incredulous about the viability of the civil institutions evolved by the Maharaja. He opined that 'a well-stored treasury with an army in arrears and clamouring for pay, increasing duties on merchants and traders, exorbitant taxes on the husbandman, with embezzlement of public revenues, and a general corruption in the higher officers of the state, are not the signs favourable to the durability of a government.'<sup>24</sup> Notwithstanding this observation, Burnes found Ranjit Singh's government rather vigorous and well consolidated. But this vigour was sufficient only 'for a native state.'<sup>25</sup>

Composition of the ruling class in the kingdom of Lahore was of special interest to Burnes. He was keenly interested in knowing the extent of the influence which the Lahore nobility could exercise over the actions of the Maharaja. The power of most of the members of the original Sikh principalities had been neutralised or subverted by the Maharaja. The void was filled by new creation. A number of individuals rose to prominence by the favour of the Maharaja namely Jamadar Khushal Singh, the Faquir brothers, the Jamwal brothers etc. Being his own 'minions', this newly created aristocracy did not have any influence on the action of the Maharaja<sup>26</sup> but somehow, these persons, particularly, the Jamwal brothers, had managed to instil this belief in the minds of the people. Therefore, they were making every use of their supposed influence 'to fill their coffers, and nourish the art of corruption.'<sup>27</sup> Hira Singh, the young son of Dhian Singh, was a favourite of the Maharaja. Dhian Singh too, being the Prime Minister, was exercising his art in the court. He was 'fortifying his native home, in the vicinity of Bhimber, which he had strengthened by guns taken from Lahore, a fact which no one disclosed

22. *Loc. cit.*

23. *Ibid.*, II, p. 282.

24. *Ibid.*, II, p. 283.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 294.

26. *Ibid.*, II, p. 284.

27. *Loc. cit.*

to the Maharaja.' He was judiciously preparing himself with an eye on the future.<sup>28</sup> Gulab Singh was managing the salt mines and holding a large portion of territory towards Jhelum.<sup>29</sup> Hence, the old Sikh aristocracy was jealous of the power of the Dogra family. But, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's power made them afraid of giving any offence. Also, the liberality of the Maharaja in bestowing large *jagirs* on the old Sikh Sardars, secured their conciliation to his rule.<sup>30</sup>

Burnes' concern with the health of the Maharaja and internal condition of the royal house appears to be a part of the British imperialistic designs. As the Maharaja's health was deteriorating, Burnes surmised that his life was not very long. Since everything in his dominions revolved around his genius, the demise of such a man would have much greater political implications. Therefore, he turned with due interest 'to speculate on the probable termination of this kingdom.'<sup>31</sup> It was believed by Burnes that Maharaja Ranjit Singh had only one son named Kharak Singh. He possessed none of the qualities of his father. Therefore, he was incapable to follow his father's footsteps even at the remotest distance. Being 'imbecile, illiterate and inanimate' he had a few favourites or enemies. He did not take any share in the State politics. Consequently, he had no faction which might have rendered him help in the hour of difficulty.<sup>32</sup> Prince Nauhial Singh, the grandson of the Maharaja, though intelligent, was yet a minor. Prince Sher Singh was 'unquestionably the most rising person in the Punjab.' He possessed most generous disposition. A 'brave and frank' soldier, he was respected by the people, particularly, the soldiery. He had equally secured the friendship of the French gentlemen in his father's service. Without much difficulty, he could succeed to the extensive realm of his father. Burnes professed that 'if Sher Singh does not secure a supremacy, this kingdom will probably relapse into the former state of anarchy and small republics; or be reduced to subjection by some neighbouring power.'<sup>33</sup> However, in spite of his ability to secure the throne and run a good administration, opines Burnes, it is to be remembered that he was 'a spurious child, and with many

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28. *Ibid.*, II, p. 285, Burnes's observations do withstand the facts. See Fauja Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

29. Burnes, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 284-85.

30. *Ibid.*, III, p. 124 and 297.

31. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 283, 285-86.

32. *Ibid.*, II, p. 296.

33. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 297-98.

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friends, he has some enemies, and will have to contend with the legitimate son, and, perhaps, treasures of his adopted father.<sup>34</sup>

The revenue receipts of the kingdom of Lahore in the 1830s was about two and a half crores of rupees per annum including the revenue due from lands alienated in *jagirs* and *dharmarth*.<sup>35</sup> The province of Kashmir, which formed 'a kingdom' in itself, yielded rupees thirty six lacs; exclusive of ten lacs which were spent on its defence.<sup>36</sup> The chief of Peshawar paid a yearly tribute about sixty thousands, excluding *bara* rice.<sup>37</sup> The revenue from Multan amounted to ten lacs of rupees a year.<sup>38</sup> The salt mines yielded eighteen and a half lacs of rupees including two and a half lacs levied as duties.<sup>39</sup> In tune with other Indian states, the collectors of the Maharaja too worked arbitrarily. At the outset, they were presumed to be dishonest; they worked on the assumption that they would 'be rifled' and 'rifled the peasant.' However, the exactions as regulated by the State were mild.<sup>40</sup>

The Punjabi peasants produced food grain, pulses, oil seeds as well as cash crops, including fruits. Wheat, barley, pulses and oil seeds were cultivated in the Punjab plains. In the sub-mountain, rice was grown. The cane thrived well and sugar was manufactured. In the *Doab*, between the rivers Satlej and Beas, a considerable quantity of cotton was produced. Indigo was reared from Multan and eastward of Lahore. Multan was also famous for its tobacco. All kinds of vegetables, common to India, were produced everywhere. Abundance of fruit grew in the province of Kashmir as well as in the rest of the Punjab.<sup>41</sup>

Numerous horses, mules and camels were found in the Punjab. These were of a superior description. The land of *Majah* (a tract between the rivers Beas and Ravi) was celebrated for the breed of its horses. So was the *dhanni* horses, found between the rivers Jehlum and Indus. The mules reared on the banks of Jehlum and the camels in southern parts of the Punjab, were equally strong and serviceable. However, the cattle, though

34. *Ibid.*, II, p. 297.

35. *Ibid.*, II, p. 288 ; III, p. 297.

36. *Ibid.*, II, p. 288 ; III, pp. 156, 297.

37. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 293, 319, 321, 325 ; III, p. 298.

38. *Ibid.*, III, p. 303.

39. *Ibid.*, I, p. 55.

40. *Ibid.*, III, pp. 297-98.

41. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 402-04 ; III, pp. 303-04.

numerous, were small and not of good description.<sup>42</sup>

Mineralogically, the Punjab was not very poor. The range of hills, extending from Jehlum to Indus, had an extensive deposits of rock-salt. Towards Mandi, in the foot-hills, mines of salt too were found. Eight-hundred thousand maunds of salt was annually extracted from the salt range at Pind Dadan Khan. It was an article of export; it brought considerable profit to the state.<sup>43</sup> Depositories of coal and iron too were found in the foot-hills.<sup>44</sup> Alum, sulphur and antimony were found in the salt range and other high lands of the Punjab.<sup>45</sup> Gold was found in the sands of Chenab. The Punjab plains yielded a considerable quantity of nitre. A best quality of charcoal was made from 'tooree' or milk-bush; it provided a necessary ingredient for manufacture of gun powder.<sup>46</sup>

Manufactures of the Punjab were varied and plenty. The range of the craftsmen, of the kingdom of Lahore, was from big guns for the army to a sickle for the peasant; from esteemed Kashmiri shawls for aristocracy to a coarse cloth—*khadar* for a layman. Cotton cloth of various texture, was manufactured at Hoshiarpur and Rahon.<sup>47</sup> Multan produced *itlas* (satin), 'kais' (a silk manufacture), and chintses in plenty. Its 'kais' was famous for 'the strength of its texture and the brilliance of its colours'. The silk scarfs and shawls were extensively used in the court of Ranjit Singh and by the aristocracy of the Punjab.<sup>48</sup> The Multani carpets were inferior to those made in Persia; but the Kashmiri carpets were certainly superior to the Persian manufacture.<sup>49</sup> 'Lungis' were made at Bahawalpur and Peshawar; the Bahawalpuri 'lungis' were celebrated for the fineness of their texture.<sup>50</sup> The Punjabi brocade was not superior to the Bengali and Gujrati.<sup>51</sup> However, the most celebrated article, the manufacture of the Punjab, was shawls, particularly the shawls of Kashmir. The value of shawls and shawl goods manufactured in Kashmir in the 1830s was nearly Rs. 70,000.<sup>52</sup>

42. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 10-11 ; II, p. 289 ; III, p. 299.

43. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 51-55 ; II, p. 401

44. *Ibid.*, II, p. 401.

45. *Ibid.*, I, p. 52 ; II, p. 402.

46. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 401-402

47. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 400-01, 406.

48. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 399-400 ; III, p. 111.

49. *Ibid.*, II, p. 400.

50. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 293-94, 419.

51. *Ibid.*, II, p. 400.

52. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 418, 435.

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Numerous trading centres in the Punjab were observed by Alexander Burnes. But 'the mart of Punjab trade' was Amritsar. Its bazars exhibited much greater appearance of wealth than Lahore.<sup>53</sup> Trade of Multan was much the same as at Bahawalpur; but on larger scale. Within a decade, a trade of ten lacs of rupees was driven in chints from Bombay to northern parts of India.<sup>54</sup> However, trade in this article was on the decrease with Persia. The Multani chints could not compete with the British manufacture. The price of the Multani chints remained same in 1830s what it was in 1820s. But the British chints could be purchased at one sixteenth of its value, what it was in the 1820s, when the British produce first entered into the Persian market. Also, it had ceased to be a rarity.<sup>55</sup> The silk article of Multan 'Kais' was exported to India (comprising British and Mughal territories) and to Central Asian countries.<sup>56</sup> The finer white cloth of the Punjab was sent to the south of Satej, Bokhara and Turkistan.<sup>57</sup> Cotton 'lungis' were exported to Afghanistan and Central Asia.<sup>58</sup> Sugar and Indigo were exported to Bokhara and other Muslim countries.<sup>59</sup> Kashmiri shawls were extensively exported to India (comprising British and Mughal territories), Afghanistan, Persia, Russia and Central Asian countries.<sup>60</sup> A store of shawls worth about 50 lacs of rupees was run at Amritsar by the State. In the year 1832, shawls worth two lacs of rupees were sent to Russia alone; the Kashmiri shawls was a craze for the nobility.<sup>61</sup>

Imports of the Punjab were fewer as compared to the exports. The chief article of imports to the Punjab was horses and a great quantity of both fresh and dried fruits. Horses came mainly from Turkistan.<sup>62</sup> Although Peshawar, Ghazni and the valley of Belabagh (near Jalalabad), exported pears, plums and pomegranates to the Punjab but the chief exporter in fruits was Kabul.<sup>63</sup> Madder was imported from Ghazni and Kandhar.<sup>64</sup> *Pashm* (wool) for shawls came from Tibet,

53. *Ibid.*, II, p. 415 ; III, p. 159.

54. *Ibid.*, II, p. 405 ; III, p. 111.

55. *Ibid.*, II, p. 407

56. *Ibid.*, II, p. 399 ; III, p. 111.

57. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 400-01, 434-35.

58. *Ibid.*, II, p. 419.

59. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 167, 435-36.

60. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 399, 428, 34-35.

61. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 398-99, 435.

62. *Ibid.*, II, p. 275.

63. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 223, 253, 255 ; II, p. 416.

64. *Ibid.*, II, p. 416.



urkistan and Bokhara.<sup>65</sup>

The Punjab of the 1830s was a most vigorous and well consolidated state. Its military resources were immense.

It could produce everything which was sufficient not only for its own inhabitants and army but also it could export things to other countries. The road from one extremity of the country to the other could admit of wheeled carriages, except in the mountains. All the rivers of the Punjab, including the Indus, were navigable.<sup>66</sup> If the royal house was not enough competent to defend its possessions, after the demise of the great Maharaja, the Sikh masses were strong enough to do so. They formed 'a healthy and vigorous body.' No other race was 'equal to their power.' Hence, Burnes admits that they were 'certainly powerful people' and better constituted to uphold their government.<sup>67</sup>

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65. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 175, 440.

66. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 288, 89 ; III, pp. 288, 99.

67. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 285-86.

## Ta'alluqdars in the Punjab in the 1840s

DR (MRS.) RADHA SHARMA\*

The literal meaning of *ta'alluq* is 'connection,' and the word was generally used in relation to land or area (*ta'alluqa*) over which an individual had some kind of a claim.<sup>1</sup> The term *ta'alluqdar*, used for the first time in the seventeenth century, meant for the holder of a *ta'alluqa*. Under the Mughals, the *ta'alluqdar* was an important intermediary who contracted with the state to collect revenue and to remit it to the royal treasury. In return for this service, he was assigned a certain share of the revenues.<sup>2</sup>

However, the position of the *ta'alluqdar* was not the same everywhere. In Bengal, for example, the large proprietors known as *zamindars* farmed out their *zamindari* rights to intermediaries known as *ta'alluqdars* who were responsible for the collection of revenue on behalf of the *zamindars*.<sup>3</sup> In Awadh, on the other hand, the *ta'alluqdars* were responsible for the collection of revenue from fairly big *zamindars* on behalf of the state.<sup>4</sup> Obviously, the *ta'alluqdars* of Awadh held a different position in terms of economic means, social status and political power than that of *ta'alluqdars* of Bengal.

The position of the *ta'alluqdars* or *malikan-i-ala* or superior proprietors as described by the early British administrators in the Punjab was different from that of the *ta'alluqdars* of the Mughal times as well as of the *ta'alluqdars* of Bengal and Awadh.

'Superior proprietor' according to the *Manual for the Guidance of the Revenue Officers in the Punjab* by R.N. Cust, is 'a great chief connected hereditarily to numerous villages, the management of which he has lost or holds with difficulty against a hardy race resident in the

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\*Department of History, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

1. Steingess, *A Comprehensive Persian-English dictionary*. See also, Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay, 1962, p. 171.
2. S. Nurul Hasan, *Thoughts on Agrarian Relations in Mughal India*, New Delhi, 1973, p. 32. See also, Irfan Habib, *op. cit.*, p. 172.
3. S. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 32; also B.H. Baden Powell, *The Land Systems of British India*, Delhi, 1974, Vol. I, pp. 505-06, 525.
4. Nurul Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 32; also, B.H. Baden Powell, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 215.

villages, who maintain that they are proprietors and cannot be called upon to pay more than a quit rent to the superior land owner.<sup>5</sup> The superior proprietors as defined by J.M. Douie were 'the descendants of persons who once exercised political sway or enjoyed a lordship over the soil from which they were ousted during the dominions of the Sikhs. ...'<sup>6</sup> They were, however, able to retain the 'right to a small grain fee' in the tract over which they once exercised authority, as revenue assignees, governors and officials.<sup>7</sup> In other words, the *ta'alluqdārs* in this region were generally the descendants of those who had either held political sway or enjoyed overlordship of the soil.<sup>8</sup> The origin of *ta'alluqdārī* right in the Punjab can be traced back to the period of political transition in the third quarter of the 18th century. The Sikh rulers were anxious to increase their revenues by extending cultivation and to diminish the influence of the old land owning tribes and ruling families.<sup>9</sup> Under their rule, the 'industrious and more frugal races' gradually usurped the rights of those whose lands they had originally been content to cultivate.<sup>10</sup> The Sikh rulers realized the importance of the actual tillers of the soil and encouraged them by realizing the revenue directly from them.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, they accepted the claims of the original owners for a certain share in the produce in recognition of their old right.<sup>12</sup>

The *ta'alluqdārs* were entitled to only a small proportion of the

5. R.N. Cust, *Manual for the Guidance of the Revenue Officers in the Punjab*, Lahore, 1866, pp. 23-24.
6. J.M. Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, Lahore, 1909, p. 68.
7. Hugh Kennedy Trevaskis, *Land of the Five Rivers: An Economic history of the Punjab from the earliest times to the year of Grace 1890* (cited hereafter as *Land of Five Rivers*, Oxford, 1928, pp. 249-50).
8. R. Temple, Settlement Report, *Jalandhar 1852* (hereafter as *SR*), p. 42; P.S. Malvill, *SR Hoshiarpore, 1852*, p. 57; *Gazetteer of Rawalpindi 1883-84*, p. 62; *Gazetteer of Sialkot 1883-84*, p. 50; J.M. Douie, *op. cit.*, p. 68. See also, Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of Sikhs*, New Delhi, 1978, p. 169.
9. J.M. Douie, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
10. *General report on the administration of the Punjab proper for the years 1849-50 and 1850-51*, p. 101. See also Indu Banga, *op. cit.*, p. 171.
11. R. Temple, *SR Jalandhar 1852*, p. 27. Also, E.B. Steedman, *SR Jhang 1874-80*, p. 69; *Gazetteer of Rawalpindi 1883-84*, p. 70.
12. *Report on the revenue administration of the Punjab and its dependencies for the year 1859-60*, Lahore, 1861, p. 111; R. Temple, *SR Jalandhar 1852*, p. 42; H.K. Trevaskis, *op. cit.*, pp. 174, 239. See also, J.S. Grewal, *The Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh: Structure of power, economy and society*, Sita Ram Kohli Memorial Lectures, Punjabi University, Patiaia, 1981, p. 13.

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total produce, varying from place to place. In the plains of Hoshiarpur district, for example, they collected *sermani*, that is a *ser* in a *maund* of the produce. In the hills of the district, especially in Doon and Nurpur, they were entitled to 2 *ser*s in every *maund*. In the district as a whole, the right varied from 2 to 10 per cent. of the revenue.<sup>13</sup> In Gujrat, too, the *ta'alluqdāri* share did not exceed 10 per cent. of the revenue.<sup>14</sup> In the district of Amritsar, the *ta'alluqdāri* allowance on the average was a little less than 2 per cent. on the total *jama'* But there again it differed from *pargana* to *pargana* : 2 per cent. in Amritsar and 1.5 per cent. each in Tarn Taran and Saurian.<sup>15</sup> In *pargana* Batala in the Gurdaspur district, the *ta'alluqdāri* share was around 3½ per cent. of the *jama*.<sup>16</sup> The *ta'alluqdārs* collected only ½ *ser* per *maund* from the produce in the Muzaffargarh district.<sup>17</sup>

The *ta'alluqdāri* share was collected in grain or it was commuted into cash. It was collected either by the revenue officials to be paid to the *ta'alluqdārs* or by the *ta'alluqdārs* themselves.<sup>18</sup> The *ta'alluqdāri* share was not deducted from the revenue due to the state but it was an additional charge on the cultivators known as *haqq-i-ta'alluqdāri*.<sup>19</sup>

The number of *ta'alluqdāri* villages was not very large. The early British administrators noticed that there were only three *ta'alluqdārs* in 8 villages of the *pargana* of Amritsar. In the *pargana* of Tarn Taran, three *ta'alluqdārs* shared only one village. There were fifty two *ta'alluqdārs*, however, in 18 villages of the *pargana* of Saurian. In the *pargana* of Batala, there were twenty three *ta'alluqdārs* in 11 villages; there were

13. P.S. Melvill, *SR Hooshiarpore 1852*, p. 57.

14. J.M. Douie, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

15. R.N. Cust, *Statistical report of the Amritsar division—1861*, Appendix, xvi.

16. *Gazetteer of Gurdaspur 1883-84*, pp. 42, 44.

17. J.M. Douie, *op. cit.*, p. 77 : The *ta'alluqdāri* share was generally 1/40 or even 1/64 of the produce.

18. R. Temple, *SR Jalandhar 1852*, p. 43 ; J.M. Douie, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

19. The difference between *ta'alluqdāri* and *chaharami* rights was that the former was paid by the owner and the latter was deducted from the revenue due to the state : *Gazetteer of Rawalpindi 1883-84*, p. 70. The dues they hitherto have received, have been calculated, and a percentage on the government revenue varying from 2 to 10 per cent has been decreed in their favour, the actual occupants being recorded as proprietors were declared responsible for the payment of the due or '*haqq-i-ta'alluqdāri*' : P.S. Melvill, *SR Hooshiarpore 1852*, p. 57.

seven *ta'alluqdars* in five villages of the *pargana* of Pathankot.<sup>20</sup> In the district of Jalandhar there were fifty seven *ta'alluqdars* in all, and in the Sialkot district their number was twenty four.<sup>21</sup> In the district of Jhelam, the total number of the recipients of *ta'alluqdari* allowance was 938, and they collected dues from 82 villages.<sup>22</sup>

We do not get detailed information regarding the racial caste affiliation of the *ta'alluqdars* but we can form some idea of their composition on the basis of the data available from the early British records. The *ta'alluqdars* were very largely composed of the Rajputs and Sayyids in Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Hoshirpur and Kangra.<sup>23</sup> In Jhelam, they belonged to the Gakkhar, Janjua and Kesar tribes.<sup>24</sup>

The *ta'alluqdars*, in the Punjab thus had no proprietary right in land, nor had they any control over its cultivation. They received a fixed allowance in acknowledgement of the formerly exercised but now obsolete rights. They did not enjoy intermediary status either of higher or lower level like the *ta'alluqdars* of Awadh and Bengal.<sup>25</sup> In the early 19th century Punjab the position of the *ta'alluqdar* was rather analogous to that of the landowners entitled to a small *malikana* from their tenants.<sup>26</sup> They were much less important than the *ta'alluqdars* of the Mughal times.

20. R.N. Cust, *op. cit.*, Appendix, xv.

21. R. Temple, *SR Jalandhar 1852*, p. 43; R.N. Cust, *op. cit.*, Appendix xv.

22. The *ta'alluqdari* allowance was collected from 51 villages in tehsil Jhelam, 19 in Pind Dadan Khan, 9 in Chakwal and 3 in Tallagang: R.G. Thomson, *SR Jhelam 1881*, pp. 148-49.

23. J.A. Grant, *SR Amritsar 1888-93*, p. 62; R. Temple, *SR Jalandhar 1852*, p. 42; P.S. Melvill, *SR Hooshyarpore 1852*, p. 57.

24. R.G. Thomson, *SR Jhelam 1881*, p. 148.

25. To quote R. Temple, 'the *ta'alluqdars* of Hindustan are men who either as servants of the native government or as farmers of the revenue or as feudal *jagirdars*, have succeeded in depressing the village communities. Nothing of the kind occurred here. Our *taluqdars* are men who have yielded to the communities and not men who have forced the communities to yield': *SR Jalandhar 1852*, p. 43.

26. The amount of this *ta'alluqdari* allowance was fixed with reference to the past *malikana* collections: R. Temple, *SR Jalandhar 1852*, p. 42.

## Impact of Emperor Aurangzeb's Orthodoxy

Dr G. S. Nayyar\*

Prominent writers like Saqi Musta'd Khan, the author of *Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri*, point out that Aurangzeb showed strict devotion to the rites of his religion. He performed ceremonies invariably in a mosque or without it among the congregation with perfect solemnity. He observed fasts in the month of Ramzan and chanted the whole of the holy *Quran* in the company of the learned. He spent the tenth of every Muharram in prayers in a mosque. Men on regular stipends were deputed to act as his deputies who went round the Ka'aba reading out copies of the *Quran* scribed by him albeit, he stuck to orthodoxy. Ban was put on entertainments and pleasures of all sorts in his empire. Music was banned all over and musicians and chanters were compensated with nominal grants and stipends. The orthodox faith patronised by the Emperor gained an unprecedented currency.<sup>1</sup> It was his fancy to make his subjects act in accordance with the decisions and precedents of the orthodox school of thought. He entrusted the work of compiling *Fatwa-i-Alamgiri* to a board of directors under the chairmanship of Sheikh Nizam of Bhagalpur at an expenditure of two lakhs of rupees. Huge sums of money were granted for religious activities contrary to the previous practice of his predecessors who had not incurred even a hundredth part of this sum.

All this sprang out of his whims. The chief apparant cause which needs to be elaborated here is that he had got his hold over the throne of his father Shahjahan by putting the latter virtually in prison and killing his real brothers named Dara Shikoh, Shujah and Murad. He frankly and openly accused Dara Shikoh, his elder brother, for his liberal theological views. He adopted a convenient approach of ensuring his stability on the throne by trying to stamp out the non-Muslims and pleasing the orthodox. He gradually intensified his campaign of orthodoxy against the non-Muslims residing in his kingdom. He found security and stability of his exalted position in adopting repressive measures against the

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\*Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.

1. Saqi Musta'd Khan, *Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri*, (ed., Fauja Singh), Punjabi translation by Darshan Singh Awara, Patiala, 1977, pp. XI, 156.

so-called 'infidels.'

The year 1669 stands as a mile stone when a fullstop was ordered to the religious activities of the non-believers.<sup>2</sup> Places of worship of Hindus and Sikhs were made target of Aurangzeb's orthodox views. He personally taught the *credo* to many and converted them to his own views. *Jazia* was imposed rigorously throughout the empire. The Hindu employees of the state were dismissed at various places with a stroke of pen. Non-Muslim innovations were stopped. The Emperor stopped the weighing of his body in gold and silver as this practice was taken as borrowed from the Hindus. Celebration of festivals of the Hindus was gradually stopped. The practice of preparation of almanacs was disallowed. *Jharoka darshan*, a practice which had been in vogue in the past, was also put to an end. The length of beard and trousers to be worn by the subjects was prescribed on the style of the Puritans. The Emperor disallowed the Hindu rulers in the royal court to put a mark on the forehead. Orders prohibiting fire-works in the state were passed.

A strong wave of repression against the non-Muslims spread throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom which resulted in Jats' rebellion followed by those of the Satnamis, the Bundelas, the Rajputs and the Sikhs.

The proselytising policy of Aurangzeb towards the Hindus urged Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs, to offer self-sought sacrifice for defending the claims of conscience. Guru Gobind Singh, later on, remarked in this connection :

The people of the earth were shocked and stunned but the heaven rejoiced at this victory of the spirit.<sup>3</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh explained this historic event of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the terms :

God protected the *tilk* and *janju* and he performed a memorable act in the *kalyuga* doing so much for the holy men as to give up his life without a groan. He did this for the sake of *dharma*. He chose to sacrifice his life rather than to betray God.<sup>4</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh shouldered the responsibility of carrying out the struggle against the fanatic policy of Aurangzeb sometime after the demise of Guru Tegh Bahadur. He admired Guru Tegh Bahadur, as

2. *Ibid.*

3. Guru Gobind Singh, *Bachittar Natak*, Amritsar, 1968, p. 46.

4. *Ibid.*; cf. M. A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*, Vol. V, Oxford, 1909, p. 295.

## IMPACT OF EMPEROR AURANGZEB'S ORTHODOXY

the supreme defender of *dharma* and had a religious motives in mind as the ninth successor of the *gaddi* of Guru Nanak. The objective of Guru Gobind Singh is clearly stated in his own autobiography, the *Bachittar Natak*, which is a part and parcel of his compositions in the *Dasam Granth*. The sole aim for which the Almighty had sent him to this world was to encourage *dharma* and to protect people from performing acts of injustice and tyranny. In his own words, God commarded the Guru thus:

I cherish you as My son and I have created you to extend the *panth*.  
Go and spread the *dharma* and restrain people from senseless acts.<sup>5</sup>

The circumstances created for the non-believers made Guru Gobind Singh state :

For this task have I come to this world, and Divine Guru has sent me for the sake of *dharma*, ordering me to spread the faith everywhere and to subdue the evil-doers. I make it clear to the holy men that I have taken birth for this purpose; to promulgate *dharma*, to raise the holy, and to cast out the evil-doers from their very roots.<sup>6</sup>

As the experience of Guru Gobind Singh and his predecessor suggested that there was a danger of interference from outside, his problem was to prepare his followers to meet aggression from whichever quarter it might come. It is apparent from the historical events that his conflict with the representatives of the Mughal emperor was potentially more serious and dangerous. After giving a good deal of thought to the problem of self-defence the Guru decided to make the wearing of arms a religious duty for his disciples. This was one of the basic reasons for the institution of the Khalsa. The claims of conscience had to be defended if necessary, with the force of arms. Even before 1699, the Guru and his Sikhs had resorted to the use of arms. Nevertheless, this injunction of the Guru for the Khalsa has to be seen in the context of the Guru's conception of God. At one place he addresses God as 'All steel.' He says 'All steel I am thou slave.' At another place this idea is made more explicit :

The arrow and the bow are you ;  
The shield and the sword are you.  
They all attain to salvation who worship you.<sup>7</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh attributed might to God through the use of the ordinary names of weapons. As a matter of fact, he thought of divine

5. *Bachittar Natak*, pp. 51-52.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

7. *Ibid.*



might as an instrument of God, justifying the use of physical force in the cause of righteousness. It is of great significance, therefore, that the *Bachittar Natak* contains the idea :

To wear the sword is to absolve oneself of a million sins.<sup>8</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh has very beautifully portrayed the indissoluble link of virtue with the use of force :

May this be your blessings on me that I never swerve from good deeds. May I fight without fear and with confidence in victory. If my end comes, may I die fighting on the battlefield.<sup>9</sup>

Guru Gobind Singh refused to compromise with Emperor Aurangzeb in a number of issues. Though the Guru suffered heavy losses including the lives of his four sons and his mother, the issue between him and the Faujdar of Sirhind was lying still undecided in 1706 when the Guru wrote to the Emperor to clarify his position. The stand taken by the Guru at this juncture is embodied in his letter written to Aurangzeb popularly called *Zafarnamah* or the epistle of victory. In this letter the Guru is open to discussion through personal meeting if proper guarantees were ensured. He lays the charge of perfidy against the officials of the Empire and he charges Aurangzeb himself with the misuse of his authority. He points out the injustice of supporting the cause of the hill chiefs without any regard to the causes involved in the conflict. The Guru asserts his firm faith in the justness of his cause, which is absolutely religious and not political. In this context, he applies the often quoted argument : 'When other alternatives fail it is lawful to take to the sword.'

In a nut shell, Emperor Aurangzeb's orthodoxy which gained unprecedented currency dominated over his sovereignty. Consequently he invited opposition from almost all quarters of the non-believers and the Sikh struggle under Guru Gobind Singh was its direct outcome.

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8. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

9. *Dasam Granth, Sawaiya Padshahi Das*, 99.

## Installation of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh and the Conflict with the British Government

DEEPINDER KAUR\*

At the time when Ripudaman Singh's father, Maharaja Hira Singh, died, in December 1911 the former was in England. As already noted, Ripudaman Singh was the only son of Hira Singh, and in his absence the last ceremonies of the late Maharaja of Nabha were performed by Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala, one of Hira Singh's nearest collateral.<sup>1</sup> However, the Maharaja of Patiala and Ripudaman Singh subsequently had a good deal of hostility towards each other, but Bhupinder Singh's relations with Maharaja Hira Singh had been quite cordial.

On hearing of his father's death, Ripudaman Singh rushed back home. He reached Bombay on 14th January, 1912. On reaching Nabha, the first thing that he did was to go to his father's *Samadhi* and announce the mourning period of his late father to last for a year.<sup>2</sup> By the time Ripudaman Singh had come back to his state, the then Political Agent, C. H. Atkins, had already come to Nabha, and had the treasury sealed. He had appointed a committee of three senior state functionaries to carry on the administration of the state. The three officers were Lala Nathu Lal, Munawar Ali Khan and Sardar Hazara Singh.<sup>3</sup> Soon after his arrival, Ripudaman Singh received two letters written to him on behalf of the British Government. Both of these were letters of condolence on his father's death. One was from C. H. Atkins and the other from Sir Louis Dane, the then Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab. They expressed sorrow at the death of the late Maharaja, and at the same time advanced their congratulations to him on his succession to the Nabha *gaddi*. Both the letters ended on an advisory note. They advised the Maharaja to follow in his father's footsteps to insure the well being of both sides, his own self as the Maharaja and the British as his suzerains. Ripudaman

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\*Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.

1. Munnalal, Syngal, *The Patriot Prince*, pp. 18-19.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

Singh was deeply hurt at the advice tendered to him. He interpreted such an advice in condolence letters as indicative of the British Government doubting his loyalty, "why must they suspect me from the very start?" he wondered.<sup>4</sup>

In sheer indignation he asserted what he believed was his legitimate right. Without inviting any representative of the British Government, he held a *dastarbandi darbar* and installed himself as ruler. It seems that he was acting within his right while doing this as this was evident from the fact that none of the other cis-Sutlej chiefs objected to his installing himself. According to the *roznamcha* of the state, on 23rd January 1912 representatives of Patiala and Jind states, including the Sardars of Bhadaur, Malaud, Bhikhi, Mehraj, Dialpura, Bechla, Gumti, etc., came along with *dastars* (turbans).<sup>5</sup> The state entry of 24th January states, "It had been announced earlier by the Maharaja that the *dastarbandi darbar* will be held today. The Maharaja came to the Darbar at 9.30 A.M. as decided, and after the ceremony donated one lakh rupees in memory of his father, Hira Singh."<sup>6</sup>

Ripudaman Singh had thus installed himself on the Nabha chiefship without any representative of the British Government to witness it. His doing was looked upon by the authorities of the political department of the Government of India as highly objectionable. To them it indicated his self-conceited nature. This act of Ripudaman Singh enraged both the Political Agent of the Phulkian States and the Government of India. They called this act of Ripudaman Singh as, "a proof of the complete ignorance of the Maharaja of the sources from which he drives his authority."<sup>7</sup> The Government informed him that this installation of his, could not be recognized. The installation ceremonies or questions of succession in the Native States were considered to be very important in those days in the recognition to a ruler. The British Government's empire depended on the absolute submission of the native chiefs, and a formal ceremony of installation duly recognized by the British Government only underlined it.<sup>8</sup> Ripudaman Singh was informed by the Government that

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Roznamcha-i-Sarkar*, Nabha State Darbar, dated 23 January, 1912.

6. *Ibid.*, dated 24 January, 1912.

7. Simla Records, Foreign and Political Department Confidential—A, Internal Branch—Section A. Nos. 78-80 of 1915, (Ref. File No. R/1/1/1024), India Office Library and Records, London (hereafter), IOLR, p. 1.

8. A.C., Arora, *British Policy Towards the Punjab States*, Delhi, 1986, p. 77.

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his installation done by himself was irregular and that he would be required to go in for another ceremony performed by the British Government. The Maharaja was of the belief that his succession was flawless in law as well as usage and that it was a matter of his hereditary right. He could not digest that it needed any British sanction. On receiving the information that he must be formally installed by Government, he raised numerous objections to the form of ceremony prescribed.<sup>9</sup> The prescribed ceremony was underlined in C.H. Atkins' letter which he wrote to Ripudaman Singh on March 22, 1912. In this letter, C. H. Atkins wrote that Ripudaman Singh's recognition as the Maharaja finally depended on his following the regular ceremony in the presence of the Resident. He further stated that he himself would come over to perform the ceremony, as the representative of the British Government.<sup>10</sup> According to this ceremony Ripudaman Singh was to be presented with the *Khilat* (dress) consisting of-

1. A Mala (necklace)
2. A *sarpech* (An ornament generally placed in front of the turban)
3. A sword with belt
4. 'Sovereigns' of the total value of Rs. 6,000/-

The Political Agent specially pointed out in his letter that, "I am to place the necklace round your Highness' neck and fasten the *sarpech* on your Highness's turban<sup>11</sup> and to bind the sword of state on your Highness's person." Lengthy correspondence followed between the Maharaja and the Political Agent on the issue raised by the latter in his letters. The Maharaja resented the letters of the Political Agent for in each of these letters, the latter insisted on the necessity of the new installation ceremony for Ripudaman Singh before the latter could be recognised as the Maharaja. Ripudaman Singh's anger was all the greater because the new ceremony being enjoined on him was not only different from the ones followed in the cases of the other Phulkian Chiefs, but also from the one followed on the installation of his own predecessor Hira Singh. Ripudaman Singh insisted that the same procedure which had been adopted at the installation of his father, Hira Singh in 1871 be followed on his installation ceremony by the Resident.<sup>12</sup> He was of the view that this procedure was necessary because it was in conformity with

9. Harbans Singh "Maharaja Ripudaman Singh—His involvement in Popular Causes," *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. IV, October 1970, p. 418.  
10. Munnalal, Syngal, *op. cit.*, p. 25.  
11. Harbans Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 418.  
12. Munnalal, Syngal, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

the ones followed at the time of successions in all Phulkian States after 1871. He insisted that in his case also the same procedure must be adopted that had been followed in Patiala, Jind and other states after 1871, because the three Phulkian states stood at par in their relationship with the paramount government. He argued that on the occasion of the installation of the Maharaja of Jind in 1888, at which his father late Maharaja Hira Singh was also present, the procedure followed was also the same.<sup>13</sup> The Government's argument for not agreeing to the sort of installation ceremony he was insisting on, was that the ceremony proposed by Ripudaman Singh had not been adopted in any Phulkian States for a pretty long time and during the previous twenty years the ceremony that had been followed, was the one that the Government was now insisting for him.<sup>14</sup> The Maharaja raised a strong objection. He emphasized that in the case of the two states of Patiala and Jind, a particular procedure was followed because of peculiar circumstances were that at the time when succession of their latest Maharaja's took place, the states were being run by the Council of Regency and they were installed on becoming majors. With regard to the new procedure which was being proposed by the Government, Ripudaman Singh alleged that the procedure was contrary to the usage and even if it was followed in the mentioned states, at a time when the *ahalkars* managed the affairs of the state, it could not be called proper.<sup>15</sup> In his case, it was not valid at all, as he was not taking over the administration from the Regency but was directly succeeding his father. He felt sure that his father would have objected to the ceremony performed in the case of Patiala and Jind if he were present to witness them, despite the somewhat peculiar circumstances in which they were performed. He remarked that on these occasions His late Highness Hira Singh was not present. Had he really attended them, he would have certainly brought this contrary procedure to the notice of the Government. He insisted that the procedure followed on the two occasions when the late Maharaja of Jind and Patiala took over, could not be considered valid nor could they be taken as precedents in his case.<sup>16</sup>

The strong objections of Ripudaman Singh did not cut much ice with the Political Department and the Punjab Government. After much ado,

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

15. Kahan-Singh, Bhai, *Mahan Kosh*, Vol. II, p. 2204; Vol. III, p. 1574.

16. Munnalal, Syngal, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

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a modified form of installation was performed on 20th December.<sup>17</sup> It was a usual practice among the Punjab States that on such occasions the installation Darbar was held by the Government of India. Ripudaman Singh, however, succeeded in evading such a Darbar. He successfully persuaded the Government that the Darbar held on his installation day at Nabha would be considered as the one held by him and not by the Government of India.<sup>18</sup> Obviously that was Ripudaman Singh's own way to make it public that he had agreed to undergo a ceremony just under protest, and that too because he did not want to be precluded from being present at the Viceroy's entry into Delhi on the 23rd of the same month.<sup>19</sup> However, he complained that he had been informed at a late hour that he could join the function at Delhi only as a ruler with ruling powers invested by the British Government and not otherwise. The Maharaja had protested saying that the invitation he had received was unconditional but since he had no other option he gave in.<sup>20</sup> That was not important, what was important was that the ceremony that he was now required to undergo, forced a feeling of bitterness into the mental make up of Ripudaman Singh. It becomes apparent immediately after the installation, that he was not satisfied with this ceremony. That he had undergone it not without protest and with a right to appeal against it and this was categorically stated by him in the speech that he delivered after his installation ceremony. In this speech he voiced his protest by categorically stating.

"I have accepted (the ceremony) ...with a heavy heart and without prejudice to my right of appeal to Higher Authorities for the redress of my just and lawful grievances".

He was only being politic when he added to his speech that,

"this unfortunate incident, however, does not lessen in the least my due sense of allegiance to the King Emperor".<sup>21</sup>

17. Simla records, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

18. Munnalal, Syngal, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

19. In 1911, when King George Vth came to Delhi, it was decided by him and the British Government to shift their capital from Calcutta to Delhi. According to this prior decision the Viceroy was to come over to Delhi in December 1912. On 23 December, 1912 the Viceroy's entry into Delhi was to be celebrated by holding a big *darbar* in which all the native rulers were invited. Ripudaman Singh did not want to be precluded from such a big *darbar*.

20. *Simla Records, Nos. 78-80 of 1915*, IOLR, pp. 1-2 ; Munnalal, Syngal, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

21. Munnalal, Syngal, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-3.

The tone of his speech was certainly as described by the Government of India, insolent. The Government actually put on record its strong objection to this speech of his.

Adverse impression that he created on the all powerfull alien Government of India proved very unfortunate to Ripudaman Singh all through his life. This impression was expressed by Edward Maclagan in very strong words, "the present Maharaja at once showed", observed Maclagan, "that he possessed all the obstinacy of his father without saving influence of his humour, his knowledge of men and his good sense".<sup>22</sup> This impression of the Maharaja once formed seemed to have remained unchanged and shared by all the Government Heads and officials with whom the Maharaja was to come in contact throughout his career.

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22, *Simla Records, Nos. 78-80 of 1915, IOLR, p. 1.*

## Giani Gian Singh : His Contribution to Sikh Studies

\*SATWINDER KOONER

The well-known researcher of Sikh studies, Giani Gian Singh was born to Bhag Singh and Desa at the Pargna of Sunam, in the village Longowal of Patiala State in 1822 A.D., (Vaisakh 5, 1879).<sup>1</sup> He was from the fourth generation of Bhai Mani Singh.

Giani Gian Singh was the youngest and fourth son of his parents. His parents had great attraction for Sikh history and religion. It was due to their sincere efforts that he grew like a huge Banian tree in the history and literature of Sikhism. Giani Gian Singh was of a short stature, having attractive features and a pleasant voice. He was a good orator and a good writer. He was baptized in a very tender age by Bhai Dulla Singh.<sup>2</sup>

According to one of the Sikh traditions prevailing in those days, Giani Gian Singh was sent to Bhai Bhola Singh for learning *gurbani* at the age of three. His sharp understanding and urge for learning, made him an outstanding orator of *Guru Granth Sahib* in a short period of two years. He read *Dasam Granth* at an early age of his career. Giani Gian Singh then started learning works like *Saruktavli*, *Bhawarsamrit*, *Vicharmala*, *Adhiatam Parkash*, *Hanuman Natak* and *Varan* of Bhai Gurdas, along with their meanings.<sup>3</sup> His good voice and way of reciting *gurbani* was rather attractive.<sup>4</sup>

It is said that Giani Gian Singh in his early days lived from hand to mouth. However, he was helped and saved from the miseries by his maternal uncle, named Karam Singh, who was a Subedar in the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.<sup>5</sup> He listened *gurbani* many a times from Giani

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\*Near Dukhniwaran Sahib Gurdwara, Patiala.

1. Giani Kirpal Singh, *Sri Guru Panth Parkash Di Prastavna*, Amritsar, 1977, pp. 35-36.
2. Bhagat Singh, *Giani Gian Singh*, Patiala, 1978, p. 3.
3. Giani Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
4. Sant Chakarvarti, 'Gianiji Di Vansh Parampara' in *Giani Gian Singh Adhyan*, Jullundur, 1960, p. 20; Giani Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
5. Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, p- 5.



Gian Singh and was impressed by his spiritual knowledge. He took Giani Gian Singh with him to Lahore in 1834.<sup>6</sup> He was kept under the care of Dhanna Singh Malwai, the *Naib Deodidar*, i. e., officer of Government *zanakhana*, Lahore and was one of the reliable persons of Sher-e-Punjab Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Maharaja used to listen 'Sukhmani Sahib' almost daily from Giani Gian Singh and kept him in his company.<sup>7</sup> In this way he had the opportunity to live with the Maharaja for some time.<sup>8</sup>

Good diet and royal living made him physically stout and strong.<sup>9</sup> Besides his knowledge of Sikh theology and history, he learnt Urdu and Persian. A number of complex Persian and Arabic words could be collected from his writings.<sup>10</sup>

Giani Gian Singh witnessed the glorious period of Sikh kingdom. He also saw the diabolical powers being crushed by the Sikhs. He used to compare the magnificent *darbar* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh with the *darbars* of Kuber and Inder.<sup>11</sup> Giani Gian Singh commented that he had seen three royal *darbars* till the age of ninety five. One of them could be compared with the *darbar* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh but that could also not attain the perfect grandeur. One among the royal *darbars* was held by Hindustan Government in the honour of Amir Kabul Sher Ali Khan at Ambala in 1864 A. D., (Samvat 1921). The other two were held in the honour of the elder son of the Queen Victoria at Lelhi and Merrut in Samvat 1924 (1867 A.D.). Giani Gian Singh usually compared these *darbars* with the *darbar* of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The man who saw the glorious rise of Sikh kingdom also saw its downfall. After the expiry of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Giani Gian Singh came to his native village Longowal.<sup>12</sup>

Hari Singh, the elder brother of Giani Gian Singh's father, who was a soldier in the Patiala army, died at the battle-field of Balu-Batta village in Patiala State. After his death Giani Gian Singh was offered a job in cavalry of Maharaja Karam Singh at Patiala.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Giani Gian Singh

6. Giani Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

8. Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

9. Sant Chakarvarti, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

10. Giani Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

13. Giani Gian Singh, *Gurdham Sangreh*, Patiala, n.d., p. 6. It was a tradition in those days that after the death of a person, the job was offered to his inheriter.

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came to Patiala at the Court of Maharaja Karam Singh. Maharaja Karam Singh observing his sharp understanding and intellect, appointed him in the Tahsil headquarter.<sup>14</sup>

On the eve of the battles of Mudki and Ferozshehar fought between the troops of Lahore Darbar and British rulers in 1845 (Samvat 1902).<sup>15</sup> the Phulkian States, in accordance with the terms of treaty with the British, promised to send food for British troops. Phulkian States appointed Sardar Badrudin Guddar for this purpose. Giani Gian Singh was also sent with this group and his duty was to deliver letters. He had a golden chance to see the loyalty of Sikh warriors and betrayal of Dogras and Brahmans. When the war ended, the Patiala troops came back. An amount equivalent to the salary of four months was offered to the employees as reward.<sup>16</sup>

Giani Gian Singh narrates that Bangroos of fifteen villages of Jind State under the leadership of Nagahia Jat, revolted in 1849-50 (Samvat 1906-07) against Maharaja Sarup Singh of Jind.<sup>17</sup> On the request of the ruler of Jind, the Patiala State sent a cavalry battalion to nab the traitors. Giani Gian Singh fought in this battle. Eighty three soldiers of Patiala troop got injured and thirty three killed in the battle-field against the traitors. Giani Gian Singh had a bullet injury, in his left thigh which resulted in fracture.<sup>18</sup> This injury made his leg defective. People of Bangar sing Vars of that battle till now.<sup>19</sup>

It is said that a sage gave him Ayurvedic treatment which healed his injury but he became permanently disabled. Pension was not given in those days.<sup>20</sup> The injury was not completely healed when a dangerous boil made him bedridden for one more year in Samvat 1909 (1852 A.D.)<sup>21</sup>

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*Continued from page 34]*

Since Hari Singh died without an issue, the job was offered to his nephew, Giani Gian Singh.

14. Sant Chakarvarti, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.
15. Avtar Singh Gill, *Lahore Darbar and Rani Jindan*, Ludhiana, 1983, pp. 141, 148; Sir Charles Gough and Arthur D. Innes, *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars*, reprint, Delhi, 1984, p. 59.
16. Giani Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.
17. Giani Gian Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
19. Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
20. *Gurdam Sangreh*, p. 7.
21. Giani Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

Giani Gian Singh's father expired in 1853 and then he had to shoulder the responsibility towards the family also. Giani Gian Singh lived with his mother while his elder brothers lived separately. Being disabled, it was difficult for him to earn money and thus he passed through very hard and miserable life. Even his mother worked as a maid servant to run the house.<sup>22</sup> He borrowed money and was under heavy debts. His land was grabbed and no body helped him. He himself started doing petty jobs such as the work of grinding, weaving and other such manual works which were even difficult for a disabled person like him.<sup>23</sup>

It is said that Giani Gian Singh got tired of life. But his mother always reminded him of Sikhs who suffered a lot and still did not lose their heart. She always encouraged Giani Gian Singh.<sup>24</sup>

Giani Gian Singh's uncle Prem Singh was in service at Patiala. He came to his native village Longowal to avail leave. Here he met Giani Gian Singh and was surprised to see him spinning the wheel. Prem Singh gave *Hanuman Natak* to Giani Gian Singh to read. He was astonished when Giani Gian Singh read out *Hanuman Natak* along with meanings in his melodious voice. The translator of *Hanuman Natak* at that time was considered as a great scholar.<sup>25</sup> His uncle got him appointed as one of the *granthis* at Patiala.<sup>26</sup> He was capable of reading books written in different languages. Due to proficiency in different languages and a knowledge in *gurbani*, he was considered a scholar and a researcher. It was one of the reasons that he was given special grade of three rupees and six annas per month,<sup>27</sup> while the grade of a *granthi* was two rupees and six annas only in those days. After his duty hours he spent his time by doing ordinary jobs. It was an additional source of income for him. During this period he learnt the art of Punjabi writing from Bhai Dharam Singh Khush Naweess. After one and a half year, Giani Gian Singh came to his mother at Longowal whose joy knew no bounds, when she noticed her son employed.<sup>28</sup>

When Giani Gian Singh came to Longowal to avail his leave, a well-known sage from Malwa, named Sant Mast Ram, was also there. The

22. Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

23. Sant Chakarvarti, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

24. Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

25. Sant Chakarvarti, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

26. One whose business is to read and expound the *Granth*.

27. Giani Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

#### GIANI GIAN SINGH : HIS CONTRIBUTION TO SIKH STUDIES

Sant stayed at the house of Giani Gian Singh. Sant Mast Ram was said to be a true ascetic. Giani Gian Singh turned over a new leaf in his company. He determined to become a *sadhu* and desired to pass the rest of his life as a *sadhu* and thus, he returned to Patiala with this desire.<sup>29</sup>

Giani Gian Singh wanted to get permission from his mother before becoming a *sadhu*, so he went back to Longowal. After noticing his strong will, her mother agreed. She imposed some conditions upon him which Giani Gian Singh accepted with great pleasure. As a matter of fact, his mother wanted to see his son a perfect *sadhu*.<sup>30</sup>

No doubt, Giani Gian Singh overcame all the hinderances yet he had to face one problem and that was to choose a sect. Giani Gian Singh disliked the sects which deprived him of Sikh norms. While Giani Gian Singh considered Nirmla sect suitable for him. He got opportunity to have a glimpse of Sant Bir Singh and told him that he wanted to be a *sadhu*. He had to take an oath that he would be a perfect *sadhu*.<sup>31</sup> Sant Baba Bir Singh was a famous Mahant of Dera Baba Gandha Singh (Barnala) at that time.<sup>32</sup> Giani Gian Singh attained spiritual knowledge from him and gained a wide popularity.<sup>33</sup>

Accompanying Sant Baba Bir Singh, he used to meditate and tried to achieve spiritual heights. He even visited different centres of pilgrimage. He was keen to continue his studies of Sanskrit and high education in *gurmat*.<sup>34</sup> His keen interest in religious studies made him the student of Pandit Tara Har Narotam, a well-known scholar of Nirmla sect of that time. Giani Gian Singh narrates that reason of writing *Gurdham Sangreh* was the result of the inspiration and encouragement given by Pandit Tara Har Narotam.<sup>35</sup> Giani Gian Singh did not have his own residence at Patiala; whenever he came to Patiala he used to stay at Panditji's house. The guidance and encouragement of Pandit Tara Har Narotam made Giani Gian Singh a great poet, a writer and a historian.<sup>36</sup>

While Giani Gian Singh was on pilgrimage, he took keen interest in the places such as Shri Damdama Sahib, Shri Anandpur Sahib, Shri

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

30. *Gurdham Sangreh*, pp. 7-8.

31. Giani Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

32. Giani Gian Singh, *Sri Guru Panth Parkash*, Patiala, 1970, p. 1318.

33. Giani Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

35. *Gurdham Sangreh*, p. 9.

36. Giani Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

Hazur Sahib, Shri Patna Sahib, Ganga Sagar, Bardwan, Jagannath Puri, Agra, Delhi, Janjibar, Dwarka, Bet Dwarka, Sudamapuri, Junagarh, Girnar hills, etc. This was not the limit of Giani Gian Singh's travels. From *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, one gets the ideas that there is hardly any holy place which Giani Gian Singh had not visited. He noticed every place carefully and noted down its historical importance. He travelled a long distance particularly at a time when there were no means of transportation.<sup>37</sup>

Giani Gian Singh spent most of his time from Samvat 1911 (1854 A.D.) to Samvat 1952 (1895 A.D.) in travelling.<sup>38</sup> It was due to his long travels that he wrote books, especially *Sri Guru Panth Parkash* and *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, in a scientific manner with good historical background.<sup>39</sup>

After his travels, Giani Gian Singh took rest at Patiala. He had a special love for this city because his teacher Pandit Tara Har Narotam used to live there.<sup>40</sup> Giani Gian Singh himself performed the *Anandkaraj* ceremony of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh. He narrates this in his book *Sri Bhupindra Nand*, written in honour of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh.<sup>41</sup> The Maharaja asked him to write some books useful for Sikh studies.<sup>42</sup> Even, the Maharaja started a separate department named 'History Society' to print the books of Giani Gian Singh and to make them available for the common people. The Secretary of this Society was Giani Hamir Singh, who was the grandson of Giani Gian Singh's brother. One lakh thirty five rupees were granted to this society.<sup>43</sup> It was Giani Gian Singh's bad luck that relations of the Maharaja of Patiala and the Maharaja of Nabha deteriorated and the literary activities and the printing of Giani Gian Singh's works stopped for the time being.

According to Sikh chronicles the hand written manuscripts of the *Tawarikh* written by Giani Gian Singh were lost. Giani Gian Singh wrote a number of books in his life time. Some of them were published and the others remained unpublished.

Giani Gian Singh was a distinguished writer and the last great poet

37. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

38. *Gurdham Sangreh*, p. 8.

39. Giani Kirpal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

40. *Gurdham Sangreh*, pp. 8-9.

41. Giani Gian Singh, *Sri Bhupindra Nand*, Amritsar, 1917, p. 13.

42. Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

#### GIANI GIAN SINGH : HIS CONTRIBUTION TO SIKH STUDIES

of Braj language of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. He was one of the first prose writers in Panjabi. He may be regarded as the first Sikh writer who attempted a systematic and comprehensive account of Sikh history. It is significant to observe that no royal patronage was given to Giani Gian Singh for his writings. Though his economic condition was not good, yet he devoted much time and energy in writing comprehensive works on Sikh history and provided a lot of material for further research.

Giani Gian Singh passed away at Nabha on 24 September 1921 at the age of 99 years, 5 months and four days.<sup>44</sup>

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44. Shamsheer Singh Ashok, 'Nirmale Sadhuan Di Sikh Dharām Nu Den,' *Nirmal Sampardya* (ed.), Pritam Singh, Amritsar, 1981, p. 155.

## Development of Education in the Patiala State (1900-1938)

MALJINDER KAUR\*

The Rulers of the Patiala State paid keen attention towards the education of their subjects. The first notable effort in this field was made by Maharaja Narinder Singh when he opened the first regular school in Patiala in 1860 A. D.<sup>1</sup> In this school education was given in Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit according to the old method of learning things by rote. In 1862 A. D. when the scope of the school was enlarged, the teaching of English and Mathematics was started but Persian remained the most popular subject. This school was managed by Diwan Kulwant Rai under the direct supervision of the Maharaja.

Diwan Kulwant Rai submitted to the Maharaja an educational scheme called *hidayatnama* containing 27 articles relating to the moral and intellectual development of the school-going children in the State.<sup>2</sup> It was a comprehensive document dealing with various aspects of education such as moral educational, time tables, examination rules, the appointment of supervising committee, stipends and scholarships, etc. The *hidayatnama* was a significant document in the evolution of education system in the Patiala State. It may be termed as the first Education Code of the State, which had a bearing upon various aspects of educational schemes, and provided a general pattern of educational system in the State. Its terms were enforced gradually after the death of Maharaja Narinder Singh. But the credit goes to the Maharaja and Diwan Kulwant Rai for initiating a definite scheme of education.

A regular Department of Education in the State was, however, established in 1870 A. D. during the reign of Maharaja Mahinder Singh. The Maharaja evinced a keen personal interest in the establishment of the Department and appointed his tutor, Master Ram Chandra, as the

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\*Lecturer in History, Khalsa College, Patiala.

1. This school was located in Haveli Nizam Khan, near Samania Gate. After a year or so it was removed to Dhak Bazar in the Haveli of Mahant Kashi Gir, File No. 229/C/285, Education, Punjab State Archives; Hereinafter P.S.A.
2. Panjab States Gazetteers, Vol. XVII—A Phulkian States Patiala, Nabha and Jind (Lahore, 1904), p. 180.

## DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE PATIALA STATE

first Director of Education.<sup>3</sup> As a result of the institution of this department, education began to make rapid strides in the State. The Patiala school mentioned above was made the Central School. Indigenous *magtabs* were converted into State schools and made branches of the Central School. By the close of 1870, there were no less than 20 schools in the State,<sup>4</sup> and the number of students on rolls were 1700. The State government also made efforts to spread education in the backward areas. Orders were issued prohibiting *begar* from school-going boys in the hill territory of the State. This helped in the spread of literacy in that part of the State.

The Central School at Patiala was raised to the status of a college in 1870 and was named Mahendra College after its founder Maharaja Mahinder Singh.<sup>5</sup> In 1876, Maharaja Mahinder Singh held the first Educational *darbar* at Patiala and in commemoration of the occasion instituted a gold medal for the best student. Patiala thus was among the first few cities of the Punjab which had a degree college.

Students were also encouraged to go out of the State for receiving engineering, medical and vocational education. In July 1876 seven students were sent for training to Thompson Engineer College at Roorkee and they continued to receive stipends from the State. Many students were sent to the Medical College at Lahore for training in medicine and were given State employment on completion of the course. Six students were sent for learning irrigation work, and one each for agricultural and forest training.

Like his predecessors, Maharaja Rajinder Singh also played his part in the development of education in the State. During his reign of 24 years (1876-1900) some significant advances were made in the education of the State. Measures were taken for improving the quality of teachers. In 1883, through an order, middle school education was fixed as minimum qualification for employment in the education department. During this period students continued to be sent out of the State to institutions such as Thompson Engineering College Roorkee, Music college Lahore, Inter School Dehra Dun, and on their return after successfully passing the examination they were taken in the State service.

3. From D.P.I. to Rushbrook William, Foreign Minister, Patiala. File No. 229/C/285, Education (PSA), p. 8.

4. These schools were at Patiala, Sanaur, Pinjour, Narnaul, Banur, Hadiaya, Kanod, Amargarh, Mansurpur, Barnala, Talwandi, Munak, Sirhind, Bassi, Payal, Bhatinda, Samana, Sunam and Narwana. *Ibid.*



Maharja Rajinder Singh also established a public library called the Rajindera Victoria Diamond Jubilee Public Library<sup>6</sup> which contained many works on science and literature. As a result of these measures the expenditure on education rose from Rs. 51 488 in 1875 to Rs. 66,944 in 1883.

During the minority of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh (1900-1909) the Council of Regency introduced a number of reforms for the development of education. In 1903 Mr H. T. Knowlton of the Indian Education Services was taken on deputation from the Punjab to draw up a scheme and to reorganise the department.<sup>7</sup> He made a deep and critical assessment of the prevalent education system. His report<sup>8</sup> was a thorough catalogue of the weaknesses and shortcomings of the system such as limited finances, unqualified teachers and a disproportionate share of resources allotted to Mahendra College. He suggested reforms to extend educational opportunities. The Council of Regency then borrowed the services of Lala Shiv Dayal of the Punjab Educational Services and appointed him Director of Public Instructions with special power to bring into effect the recommendations of Mr Knowlton. The followings reforms were made.<sup>9</sup>

- a) 32 primary schools for boys and 8 for girls were started.
- b) Bassi school was raised to a High School.
- c) Small Anglo-Vernacular primary schools within walking distance of large towns were converted into Vernacular Primary School and some schools were reduced from Primary into lower Primary schools.
- d) Some buildings were newly erected and improvements were made in existing ones.
- e) Drawing as a relative subject was introduced in two High Schools.

5. The foundation stone of the new college building was, however, laid in 1874 by Lord Northbrook, the then Viceroy of India and the opening ceremony was performed by Lord Ripon on 18th March, 1884. Initially it was affiliated to Calcutta University and latter on to the Panjab University.
6. A Short account of the charitable administrative Acts in the reign of Maharaja Rajinder Singh, 1883, p. 2, Central Public Library, Patiala.
7. Annual Report on the Administration of Native States under the control of Punjab Government, 1902-03, p. 2.
8. Report on the Condition of Education in the Patiala State (Lahore, 1904). W. Eric Gustafson and Kenneth W. Jones, *Sources on Punjab History* (Delhi, 1975) p. 423.
9. File No. 229/C/285-Education (PSA).

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- f) Boarding houses were attached to the Sunam, Narnaul, Barnala, Rajpura, Bassi and Banur Schools. But most of the boarding houses did not have satisfactory arrangements. The sanitary conditions of the boarding houses were far from satisfactory; the supply of furniture too was inadequate<sup>10</sup> Private arrangements had to be made at some places to meet the requirements. It may also be noted that the schools at Patiala city, Sanaur, Sirhind, Sanghol and Longowal had no boarding houses at all.<sup>11</sup>
- g) Evening classes for the training of un-trained teachers were opened as an experimental measure and many teachers were trained at State expenses. Later this idea was abandoned on account of certain practical difficulties.<sup>12</sup>
- h) For the first time regular gradation of pay scales of teachers was introduced.
- f) Clerical commercial classes were started on experiment basis in the City High School.

Besides the above measures, an Inspectress of Girl's Schools was appointed and Victoria Girls School was started.

When Maharaja Bhupinder Singh came of age, he took adequate interest in the spread and development of education in the State, considering the venture as a vehicle to produce good citizens able to discharge their duties efficiently. While realising the necessity and importance of education the Maharaja firmly believed that without education the administrative machinery too could not be run effectively, as is evident from the following decree issued by him.

No one even if he belongs to the royal family shall be taken in State service, if he has not passed a certain examination.<sup>13</sup>

Owing to the personal interest and liberal patronage of the dynamic Maharaja, education made remarkable strides. The primary education was made free throughout the State in 1911.<sup>14</sup> More important still, the Maharaja's Government passed Patiala Primary Education Act in April 1927,<sup>15</sup> under this Act the education was made compulsory as well as free within the Patiala Municipal limits.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, it was the duty

10. File No. 411, Education Department, 1915, A.D., p. 7 (PSA).

11. *Ibid.*

12. Administration Report of Patiala State, 1929-30, p. 113 (PSA).

13. '*Partap*' newspaper, Kanpur, dated 29th August, 1926.

14. File No. H. 95 B., p. 2 (PSA).

15. Patiala Government Gazette, dated 13 April, 1927 ; 20 July, 1927, p. 30.

16. File No. 229/C/285, Education, p. 11 (PSA).

of every parent that a boy residing within such area who was not under 6 and not over 11 years of age, should be sent to the recognised school with exceptional excuse for non-attendance.<sup>17</sup>

Since the deplorable condition of the primary education was to a very large extent due to lack of proper, regular and systematic supervision and inspection,<sup>18</sup> fortnightly or three weeks' supervision visits were introduced. It was also decided that a regular up-to-date programme of annual inspection was to be drawn up and sent to the office of Director of Public Instructions for approval.<sup>19</sup> Not even a single school remained unvisited under this programme. Annual inspection tour programme of the Director of Public Instructions was also routined in every school.

Perhaps in no other sphere had the Government been more keen and active than in diffusing the knowledge of the three R's<sup>20</sup> among the subjects of the State. Every possible effort was made to take education to the very door steps of the villagers. The government of the Maharaja chalked out an ambitious scheme for the expansion of education among his subjects, named as 'Ten years Education Programme'.<sup>21</sup> Under this scheme it was proposed to open in the year 1928 one primary school for boys in every town with a population of 1600 or more, at least one school within  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles of every village; one middle school for every town with a population of 5,000 or more; one high school for every town with a population of 10,000 or more. At the fifth year (1933) there should be one primary school for every town with a population of 1250 or more and at least one school within one mile of every village. At the tenth year (1938) there was to be one Primary School for every town with a population of 1000 or more.

At the time of the sanction of this programme there existed 7 high schools (6 for boys and 1 for girls), 21 middle schools (20 for boys and 1 for girls) and 238 primary schools (194 for boys and 44 for girls).<sup>22</sup> And the quinquennial progress report in 1933 showed the existence of 13 high schools, 18 Anglo-Vernacular, 20 lower middle, 245 primary schools.<sup>23</sup> Thus the first five years saw considerable progress towards the

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17. Patiala Government/Gazette, *op. cit.*, p. 35 (PSA).

18. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Reading, Writing and Arithmetic.

21. File No. 163 2/275, Education (PSA).

22. Foreign and Pol. Department Reform B, File No. 194-R, 1928, pp. 1-9(PSA).

23. File No. 1632/275, Education (PSA).

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consummation of the ten years plan which judged by its results had been quite satisfactory. The next five years recorded further remarkable progress so that in 1938 Patiala had 306 high, middle and primary schools for the boys and 57 schools, including one high school, for girls.<sup>24</sup>

The girls education was not ignored. Regarding the girls education it was proposed in the scheme of 1928<sup>25</sup> "to establish one primary school for every village with a population of over 4,000 and at every *niabat*, Tehsil and *nizamat* Headquarters in the first year; one primary school for every town with a population of 3200 or more and one middle school for every town with a population of over 20,000 in the fifth year; and one within every *nizamat* in the tenth year, and 5 primary schools and one middle school in the tenth year."

The figures given in the scheme of 1928 gave the minimum to be achieved in the course of specified number of years. The carrying out of such an ambitious programme obviously called for additional funds which could not be made out of the normal budget provisions. The Patiala authorities resolved that all profits from other departments of the State hereafter may be ear-marked for the development of the education, i.e., for proper equipment and furniture in the schools and for securing recruitment of better and trained teachers. The Maharaja sanctioned liberal additional grants to the department.<sup>26</sup>

It is important to note that no fee was charged from the students of Primary and Middle Schools. It was only in the Secondary Schools that the fees were charged. In order to meet the expenditure to some extent which the ambitious scheme of 1928, involved, the tuition fee in those schools had been slightly increased.<sup>27</sup> But even with enhanced tuition fee, Patiala State was still imparting the cheapest education throughout the Punjab in comparison with both the state and the non-state schools.

The most significant feature of education of the period was that great impetus was given to the study of Panjabi. This language was made compulsory in the second, third and fourth primary classes.<sup>28</sup> The teaching of Panjabi was encouraged in other classes also as far as possible. It was introduced in all the schools except where Hindi language had been prevalent and in the Mohammaden schools. Its

24. 'Forward' newspaper, Calcutta, dated 23 August, 1928.

25. Administration Report of Patiala State, 1938-39, p. 127 (PSA).

26. Foreign and Political Department, Reform B, File No. 194-R, 1928, pp. 1-9 (PSA).

27. Administration Report of Patiala State 1938-39, p. 112 (PSA).

28. Administration Report of Patiala State, 1938-39, p. 127 (PSA).

progress in the Patiala circle was reported fairly satisfactory but in the Barnala circle the result was at first far from satisfactory as an Inspector of this circle reported.

It (Panjabi) cannot be successful unless it is adopted as the court language throughout the State. The general masses cannot like it when they find Urdu in full swing in courts and other State business is carried in through it.<sup>29</sup>

In response to this recommendation Panjabi was declared as the court language of the State in 1910. Patiala was the first State in this region to do so. And the first Panjabi typerwriter was also got manufactured with the help of the Patiala State.<sup>30</sup>

There were some schools in the State where the sole medium of instruction was Panjabi in Gurmukhi script. They were all up to the Primary standard and after passing in this school the students were to join the other schools of higher standard. Later on the Sikh population expressed the desire that these schools should be raised to the status of middle schools, because the boys of these schools after passing the primary examination could not join any of the secondary schools—with Urdu as their only medium. This demand, however, was not conceded and Panjabi remained the medium in the said school up to Primary Classes only.

Along with the primary education the scope of middle and high school education was also enlarged. One remarkable feature of high school education, which was admittedly lacking even in the British Punjab, was the even and equitable distribution in the State. The middle and high schools were so located as to enable the pupils in the neighbourhood to avail themselves of these facilities without being constrained to go to far off places. The equal opportunities was the essence of the distribution of these facilities. The result was an all round increase in the number of students in the various kinds of schools. The number of boys in the several middle and high schools rose by 1938 to 12,187.<sup>31</sup>

29. File No. 517/164, Education.

30. 'Ala Singh to Yadavindra Singh,' an article by Dr Ganda Singh, published in *Pnaji Pani* (Punjabi Magazine), January 1975, p. 19.

	1937	1938
31. No. of scholars in High schools	5373	6033
No. of scholars Upper middle Schools	3886	4072
No. of scholars in lower middle schools	2070	2082
	11,329	12,187

Administration Report of Patiala State, p. 125 (PSA)

## DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE PATIALA STATE

Realizing full well the importance of the scout movement for the school boys, the Patiala authorities paid special attention to it. They introduced it in the State in 1926. Soon the movement was well-organised and properly diffused. The aim of the movement was to help the boys of Patiala state schools, irrespective of race, creed or caste, to become good citizens, to form their character by training them in habits of observation, obedience and self-reliance, to teach them services useful to the public and handicrafts useful to themselves; and to promote their physical development and health.<sup>32</sup>

There were some well-defined restrictions and conditions for joining this association. A boy intending to join the boy scout association was supposed to be between the age of 11 to 18 years and was required to pass the following tests:<sup>33</sup>

- a) He should know the scout law, signs and salutes.
- b) He should be aware of the composition of Patiala State, its flag, union jack, sewa samiti flag etc.
- c) He should be familiar with the uses of scout staff.
- d) He should be able to tie six simple knots and know when to use them.

This association was affiliated to the All India Boys Scouts, Association, New Delhi. The Maharaja took a keen interest in this useful movement. Training camps were organised and scout masters were trained. Scout rallies were organised from time to time and place to place. This movement had, in an incredibly short space, expanded enormously and made phenomenal progress. On account of its ramification in all districts it was popular.<sup>34</sup>

Mahendra College needs a special mention in the educational account of the State. During this period a unique characteristic of this institution was that the college education began to be imparted free to all classes by the orders of Maharaja from 1911 onwards.<sup>35</sup> This attracted a large number of students from outside. There were suitable arrangements for the teaching of both medical and non-medical science groups in the intermediate classes. The college was provided with up-to-date and well equipped laboratories, class rooms, library and reading rooms.

32. Ijlas-i-Khas copy of letter No. 280 E dated 1926.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Copy of *arzdashit* No. 159 dated 1927 (PSA).

35. History Section of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, File No. H-95-B(PSA).

Suitable arrangements were made for imparting instructions in the B. A., Intermediate Arts, Intermediate Science faculty and Modern Indian Language for intermediate and B. A. classes.<sup>36</sup> The college authorities devoted themselves with much earnestness to the promotion of education on sound footings. Societies for debating and essay writing were established in the college. Students were encouraged to take part in these societies, namely, literary Society and Economics Society. Papers were read and discussions were held. This gave a very healthy exercise to the boys for developing their power of expression.

Athletic and sports were organised with success. Physical education was emphasised and encouraged by the holding of tournaments and award of prizes.<sup>37</sup> The sports department was reorganised, and brought up to university level of physical culture. All possible facilities were given to the students to take active interest in games. The college sent teams for university tournaments in Hockey, Foot-ball, Cricket, Volley-ball, Basket-ball and Gymnastics and Athletics. It is noteworthy that during the year 1928 A. D. the college secured four prizes in gymnastics.<sup>38</sup>

In the college tutorial work was introduced. This helped in establishing personal contact between the students and the members of the staff. Each professor was the incharge of a group of students to whom he offered advice on various problems that arose in the course of the students' career in the college. He took interest in their general activities also. The Maharaja who took a very keen interest in the advancement of education raised the pay of the Principal of the College from Rs. 1000/- to Rs. 1200/- p.m. and that of the professors working under him from Rs. 250/- to Rs. 450/- p.m. It may also be noted that professorships in the Patiala College carried pension on British India

36. There were arrangements for the teaching of following subjects in B. A. and Intermediate ;

*B.A.* :—English, A course of Mathematics, B Course of Mathematics, Philosophy, Economics, Political Science, History, Persian, Sanskrit and Arabic, with Honours classes in English, Mathematics and Economics.

*Intermediate Arts* :—English, Philosophy, Mathematics, History, Economics, Persian, Sanskrit and Arabic.

*Intermediate Science Faculty* :—English, Biology, Physics, Mathematics and Chemistry.

*Modern Indian Language for Intermediate and B.A.* :—Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. Administration Report of Patiala State, 1938-39, p. 129 (PSA).

37. Administration Report of Patiala State 1929-30, p. 112 (PSA).

38. History Section of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh, File No. H. 95, B (PSA).

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pattern.<sup>39</sup>

These progressive measures enhanced the prestige of this institution among the educated classes of the people. The college was very popular and enjoyed good reputation throughout Punjab. It ranked among the best managed colleges in Northern India.

That the education of girls had received an equal attention is the signal achievement of the State. Generally the female education was looked upon with disfavour. In some families girls were taught only Gurmukhi, Nagri, Sanskrit, and Arabic according to their religion.<sup>40</sup> However, the first impulse in female education was given during the minority of Maharaja Rajinder Singh<sup>41</sup> when he ordered to award the people who sent their girls to the schools. There was a great response to this call. This went a long way in the progress of female education. By 1907 there were 23 girl schools in the state, out of which one was middle and 22 were primary schools.<sup>42</sup>

The Patiala authorities following the example of the Baroda and Mysore State which made girls' education compulsory in the state in 1912.<sup>43</sup> It is interesting to note that English had been introduced in the Victoria Girls School, Patiala in 1910 A. D.<sup>44</sup> Within a year the girls made great progress in it. It was started from the fourth primary class. About 25 girls were learning English in the different classes. But due to the shortage of competent teachers English could not be taught on right models.

The teaching of needle work was also encouraged and for that purpose a school was established in 1910. Regarding the progress of the school, the Director of Public Instruction observed:<sup>45</sup>

On the whole, I was favourably impressed with the work done in this school. All kinds of hand machine work is taught regularly to the girls which will be useful in their future life. Since 1911, I have appointed a tailor (by the monthly subscription paid by the girls) to teach systematically cutting and sewing all kinds of garments for family use.

39. *The Tribune*, October 28, 1912.

40. Phulkian States Gazetteer, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

41. Account of the Charitable Administrative Acts *op. cit.*, 1883.

42. File No. 191/328/115, 1907 Education, p. 43 (PSA).

43. File No. 222/225, 1912 Education, p. 339 (PSA).

44. Administration Report of education, 1911, Part B (PSA).

45. File No. 224/115 Education, 1912(PSA).

46. File No. 411, Report on Education, Patiala, 1915, p. 7.



The poor girls were given clothes, books and shoes etc., from the charitable fund. This fund was collected by the State authorities for miscellaneous purposes particularly for philanthropic work. Kindergarten was established as well as the paper work, clay modelling and other works were taught to the girls alongwith weaving, spinning, knitting and sewing. The result in these fields was fairly satisfactory. It may be mentioned that the Victoria Girls School was foremost of all in the hand-work.<sup>46</sup>

Connected with the female uplift were weekly girls' clubs and mothers' meetings which were held regularly for helping the girls in forming their moral character for future life.<sup>47</sup> Lectures were delivered and essays written by the girls. In mothers' meetings lectures on religious and social subjects were delivered so as to encourage them in imparting education and training to their female children.

An up-to-date Girls High School was started at Patiala in 1928.<sup>48</sup> and placed under the management of an experienced Lady Superintendent. This school in the years to come maintained its tradition of showing good results in the Matriculation Examinations. An Inspectress was appointed for girls' schools. Separate schools for Hindu and Mohammedan girls were maintained in the primary stage because of the different media of instruction for the girls of the two communities.

These progressive measures attracted the attention of all classes and greatly facilitated the spread of female education, thus establishing it on firm ground. At the time of the death of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh in March 1938 there were not less than 59 girls' schools in the State.<sup>49</sup>

A noteworthy fact is that due care was taken of. A regular system of medical examination of pupils was introduced to improve the health of school children.<sup>50</sup> In this respect the Patiala State prepared a scheme

47. File No. 224/215, Education, 1912 (PSA).

48. Census report of Patiala State, 1931, p. 185.

49. Schools	1915	1921	1932	1938
High School	Nil	Nil	1	1
Upper Middle School	1	1	1	1
Lower Middle School	1	1	1	1
Primary Schools	42	43	53	55
Total Schools	44	45	56	58

File No. 411; Census Report of Patiala, 1921, p. 188; Administration Report of Patiala State, 1938-39, p. 127, (PSA).

50. File No. 253/C/285, Education, dt. 14th May, 1927, p. 42 (PSA).

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on the lines of the Punjab scheme.<sup>51</sup> Under this scheme the Director of the Public Instruction was made responsible for looking after the health of school children and he was supposed to submit medical inspection report twice a year. The sickly children were provided regularly with medicine in the presence of their teacher. The poor students were exempted from the annual fee of medical inspection. Separate arrangements were made for girls. Lady doctors were arranged for their medical check up. This scheme was implemented only in the Middle and High Schools. Its cost was raised by the levy of an annual fee of eight annas per student. Even with this increase, the fee in the Patiala schools was less as compared to that of schools in the Punjab or elsewhere.

The Maharaja's love for education had not been confined to his own State. The Khalsa High schools at Moga<sup>52</sup> was named after him and wholly financed by the Patiala State. This school was situated in the Ferozepur district in British territory. Managing committee of the school was appointed by the Maharaja. Evening games was a special feature of the school. Besides a school garden there was an agricultural farm, and the work on this farm was done by the students, taking up agriculture as a subject. The religious side of the life of the students was also well looked after.<sup>53</sup>

Patiala State had been a pionner State in the cause of fighting ignorance. The generosity of its rulers in this respect had not been limited to its own territorial jurisdiction or to the Sikh institutions alone. A number of big institutions outside the State belonging to various commities were benefited by Maharaja Bhupinder Singh's princely donations. A list of some of the more important munificent donations is given below:<sup>54</sup>

a) Khalsa College, Amritsar	Rs. 6,00,000/-
b) Lady Hardinge Medical College	Rs. 2,00,000/-
c) Sikh Kanya Mahavidayala, Ferozepur	Rs. 10,000/-
d) Tibbia College, Delhi	Rs. 25,000/-
e) Hindu' University, Benaras	Rs. 5,00,000/-

Besides sending a large number of State subjects for technical and professional studies to the institutions in British India every year, a

51. *Ibid.*

52. File No. 229/C/285, Education, P. 11 (PSA)

53. Administration Report of Patiala State, 1938-39, pp. 136-37, (PSA).

54. *The Times of India* dt. 13th June, 1932, p. 11.

number of students were sent at the expense of the State to Europe, for higher studies. Scholarships tenable outside state for the training of State students were very generously given. Curiously enough even the girl Students were awarded gold medals and scholarships alongwith boys. From the year 1913, a gold medal worth Rs. 100/- was sanctioned to be awarded annually to the best successful girl in the State Girls Schools.

Thus during a span of about thirty years (1900-1938) of our study the educational system of Patiala was revolutionised. Educationally Patiala had always been in the forefront. It was the first Princely State to establish an Arts College at a time when such an educational experiment was regarded as novel in Indian states.<sup>55</sup> The college with its beautiful hostel and other facilities was indeed a unique feature in the education history of Indian states. It was the only state where not only primary education but even College education was given free of cost to students from the state. Patiala had thus set an example not only to the other Indian states but to the whole of India by making college education free. On this shining example, Patiala, under the guidance of the Maharaja Bhupinder Singh stood alone.

The Maharaja had issued orders to all the high officials of the state to help the cause of education<sup>56</sup> To encourage those, who took pains in spreading education, he bestowed *sanads*, and *dushalas*<sup>57</sup>.

Not only this the Maharaja had extended facilities to the children of Indian soldiers in introducing the government of India's scheme into the state<sup>58</sup> Under this scheme, facilities were given to the education of the children of soldiers who died or became permanently incapacitated in the Great War (1914). Besides free education, arrangements were made for the supply of all the necessary text books at all stages of education to them. Stipend was also granted to these children.

Commendable as were the measures taken by Maharaja Bhupinder Singh for the development of education in the Patiala State, one should not be misled to suppose that there was cent per cent literacy in the state or that the Patiala subjects were the most highly educated people in the Northern India. The primary education had, no doobt, been made free and compulsory for boys as well as for girls but not many people took

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55. *Ibid.*

56. '*Partap*' newspaper Kanpur, dt. 29th Aug. 1926.

57. Patiala Gazettee, *op. cit.* 1910-11. (PSA) p. 5

58. *Ibid*, Nov, 30th, 1921.

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advantage of this regulation in practice. It appears that in the rural areas a great majority of persons continued to remain illiterate. The benefit of higher education was also confined to a small section of urban population. Very few privileged and influential persons or their children basked in the sun of the Maharaja's patronage. The money spent on the education of the masses in proportion to the large resources and revenues of the state was, according to the modern standard, by no means adequate. It was a grievous charge levelled against the state administration under Maharaja Bhupinder Singh that huge sums of public money were spent on personal pleasures of the Maharaja than on education and public works of the utility. Nevertheless, some credit is due to the enlightened Maharaja for having paid personal attention towards the development of education in the state. In introducing free and compulsory primary education, for providing free college education and upholding the cause of Panjabi Language, Maharaja Bhupinder Singh was far ahead of other rulers of northern region. He was also second to none in giving liberal donations for the cause of education to a number of institutions of British India.

# Moulding of Popular Perceptions : Image of the Congress in Post-colonial Haryana

PREM CHOWDHRY\*

The nature and social basis of the Congress support in Haryana in the post-colonial India continues to await extensive research and examination. Its neglect assumes a degree of anxiety as there is no dearth of research on other states, including its once counterpart, Punjab. In fact, Haryana shows a peculiar political ambivalence, both among its leadership as well as its electorate. This ambivalence has more often than not meant the awarding of political-turn-coats, even the most notorious ones. This region's fluctuating political loyalty has not allowed any political party, national or regional to take firm or even identifiable roots in its varied social soil. That is why an understanding of Haryana's political phenomenon has been a challenge to the political *pundits*.

In the popular perception, however, Haryana emerges as an 'anti-Congress' region and the Congress Party in Haryana seems to be stuck with an 'anti-zamindar' image. This image, the reality notwithstanding, is very often cited as a reason for the diminished and diminishing hold of the Congress in this state. The present paper attempts to examine this image in the colonial past and its immediate aftermath to ascertain the position of the Congress as it exists today. It seeks to go into those factors which have given rise to this perception, its growth and general acceptance. As such it offers a comment on the state of Haryana's politics and its nature.

## I

### Erosion of All India Image : Congress as 'anti-zamindar'

Historically, right from the beginning the lukewarm attitude of the Congress urban leadership to the Punjab Alienation of Land Act, 1900, dubbed the party as anti-zamindar.<sup>1</sup> Here, it may be explained that in Punjab and Haryana, the word 'zamindar,' unlike in most other provinces

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\*Research Scientist, History, University Grants Commission, attached to the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

1. Gerald A. Heogar, "Growth of Congress Movement in Punjab 1920-40," *Journal of Asian Studies*, November 1972, pp. 39-52.

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of India where it was and continue to be generally used for very big owners of land, was applied to any one who owned land, however little. These zamindars belonging to the dominant agricultural castes, given a constitutional status by the 1900 Act,<sup>2</sup> and many among them being the major and direct recipients of benefits under the government schemes based on agriculture and non-agriculture, rural and urban divisions, resented open attacks of the Congress leadership on their '*magna carta*.'<sup>3</sup> The merchant moneylender element in the Congress again opposed the agrarian legislation of the 1930s, which stood to affect them adversely, thereby damaging themselves completely and opening the Congress Party to a populist attack. The effort of some of the Punjab Congress leaders to show that agrarian laws were against the agriculturists was not successful. These endeavours of the Congressmen, together with the Party's own vacillating stand on agrarian issues, and the solid opposition offered by certain non-agriculturists in the name of entire castes, justified in the eyes of the general rural public, the criticism made specially by the south-east Unionist leadership that the Congress was an association of *Sahukars* (merchants) and shopkeepers and anti-agriculturists. The roots of Congress failure in Punjab lay in its total inability to adopt or even project agrarian radicalism in the predominant agrarian milieu of the province, specially in face of its adoption by the Unionists and in view of their sweeping legislation in this field. The articulate rich non-agriculturists among the Congressites, the major critics of the agrarian legislation could hardly expose the class nature of the agrarian legislation without exposing their own exploitative positions. The piecemeal criticism without any explanations did more to harm the Congress by confirming its urban mercantile and moneylender interests and social base. Congress inability to offer and project an alternative legislative programme that would have benefited their growing social base found in this region among small landowners, tenants agricultural labourers, at the expense of both the agriculturist and non agriculturist landlords, moneylenders and big landowners, destroyed their claims to speak for any section of zamindars.

2. The Punjab Alienation of Land Act, 1900, created certain landowning castes as 'Statutory Agriculturist Castes.' For details of these castes, see Alienation of Land Bill of 1900. *Gazetteer of India*, 1899, Part V.
3. This and the rest of the argument which follows, may be looked up in Prem Chowdhry, *Punjab Politics : The Role of Sir Chhotu Ram*, New Delhi, 1984, Chapters 6 and 9.

The benefit of the erosion of this all India and rural mass base image of the Indian National Congress was taken by the Unionist Party, which projected an 'anti-zamindar' image of the Congress to successfully turn this region into an 'anti-Congress' one. This image has not only remained a part of the popular perception to this day but has in fact got strengthened. This is despite the fact that Haryana has had its share of the Congress domination which could not have been possible without the support of a large number of zamindars. The Congress shows a clear hold for initial thirty years beginning from the 1946 elections (except for the short Congress defectors' ministry of nine months in 1967), till its rout in 1977 in the aftermath of the emergency period. Since then, this region's non-Congress nature has been more pronounced; the seven years of Bhajan Lal ministry, 1980 to 1987 were not born out of an electoral victory but out of an *en-masse* defection of his ministry in 1980, from the Janta elected government of 1977 to the Congress fold. The year 1982 certainly showed an electoral return of the Congress, only to be routed again by the Lok Dal in 1987. Now the same Lok/Janta Dal, like the Congress, awaits an uncertain future in the coming elections.

## II

### **The initial neglect : Punjab factor**

A clue to the understanding of the Congress in Haryana and its inability to take identifiable roots lies in the immediate aftermath of independence and the first election of 1952. The initial post-colonial years saw a continuation of the electorally thrown up Congress of 1946, which had triumphed due to an extraordinary set of circumstances, without having enlarged its social roots in any marked way.<sup>4</sup> The first general election was dominated by larger than ever Congress colossus with its record of sacrifices and identification with political independence. During this election, Bhim Sen Sachar, the first Chief Minister of united Punjab maintained<sup>5</sup> : "there was practically no opposition... We were standing on the pedestal of the Congress... we were nothing."

Indeed, there did not seem to have been any attempt of the Congress to educate this region, which had historically remained outside the

4. For details of the 1946 election and a reversal of the Congress and the Unionist Party's fortunes, see Prem Chowdhry; "The Triumph of the Congress in South-East Punjab : Elections of 1946" in D.N. Pannigrahi (ed.), *Economy, Society, and Politics in Modern India*, New Delhi, 1985, pp.

5. Bhim Sen Sachar, *Oral History Transcript*, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, pp. 154-55.

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national mainstream for such a long time, or to project the Congress ideology with attempts to translate it into practice. This region's politics, till it was carved out as a separate state on the 1st of November 1966, remained totally neglected, being dominated by the Central Punjab political leadership generally referred to as the 'Jullunder Division.'<sup>6</sup> For example, even after the first general election, the Congress High Command had no representative member from the Haryana region, although it had one from the Jullunder Division; the All-India Congress Committee had sixteen delegates from Punjab, out of which only four were from Haryana; the Punjab Pradesh Executive Committee had twenty-three members with only five from Haryana; further the Election Board, the Credential committee and the Electoral Tribunal were all "full of Jullunder people." Haryana region could never get adequate representation in any political sphere in keeping with its numerical strength. So such so that, in every election the candidates from the Punjab region were quite often put up from the constituencies of Haryana as the Congress candidates.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, there was hardly any chance of any projection and acceptance of the needs and demands of this region.

A few more details of the respective representation of the two regions, i.e., Haryana and Punjab after the formation of 1952, 1957 and 1962 ministries will go a long way in showing how under the so-called 'Congress rule' this region continued to remain neglected.<sup>8</sup> In the post-1952 period, in the whole of united Punjab, two central ministers were chosen, both from the Punjab counterpart; Punjab Cabinet had eight ministers, only one was from Haryana; the Speaker and the Chairman of the Punjab Assembly not only in 1952 ministry but till 1966, remained non-Haryanvis. In the Legislative Council there were eighteen nominated members of which only two were from Haryana; the Vidhan Sabha Committee had sixteen members from the Punjab region and only four

6. *Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol. X, Part II, 22 December 1955, Debate on the Report of the States' Reorganization Commission, see speech of Ghamandi Lal Bansal, member from Jhajjar-Rewari Constituency.

7. *Ibid.* See speech of Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava.

8. J R. Siwach, "Haryana : Social Dynamics and Politics of Defection," in Iqbal Narain (ed.), *State Politics in India*, Meerut, 1970, pp. 88-112.

9. For comparative statistical details of Punjab and Haryana in different branches of private and public life, see *The Report of Haryana Development Committee, Final Report*, Chandigarh, 1966.

10. *Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol. X, Part II, 22 December 1955, see speech of Ghamandi Lal Bansal.



from its Haryana counterpart. Out of the two nominated committee members none was from the Haryana region. The successive governments continued this pattern, with insignificant improvement. For example, in 1957, though Haryana had forty-seven Congress members in the Assembly as compared to seventy-one from its Punjab counterpart, yet this forty per cent Congress legislative representation was given a mere 23.53 per cent reflection in the Council of Ministers. This rose to 34.47 per cent in 1962, but again fell to 27.77 per cent in 1966. Moreover, in the distribution of key portfolios also Haryana always got the low ranking ministerial charges. So far as the services were concerned even in 1965, Haryana region had "distinctly inferior position" in the twenty-four categories of gazetted posts, when compared to the Punjab region.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the worst charge that "even a *chaprasi* comes from Jullunder" stuck truth.<sup>10</sup> More significantly, major attention and allocation of developmental funds in the fields of education, agriculture, irrigation, means of transport, communication, and industries, etc., were concentrated in the Punjab part of the United Punjab.<sup>11</sup>

Part of the reasons for this state of affairs was the inability of this region to throw up important, towering and widely accepted leadership. Moreover, intense factionalism existed here. Factionalism was in fact a historical legacy of the entire Punjab. The close physical proximity of Punjab and more so of this region to the national capital, led to a direct and persistent interference of the Central High command which added and abetted different factions at different times.<sup>12</sup> In these factional fights Haryana's different factions played their own game.

During 1947-66, Haryana region continued to suffer the rise and fall of various factions, without anyone being able to give it any sense of direction. The so-called Congress leaders of Haryana, now in the Congress, now out of it, could hardly assert themselves in the politics of combined Punjab

11. See *The Report of Haryana Development Committee*, as in No. 9.

12. For factional rivalry in Punjab politics as also the role played by different factions from its Haryana region, Surinder Suri, *1962 Elections: A Political Analysis*, New Delhi, 1962, pp. 136-40; Subhash C. Kashyap, *The Politics of Defection: A Study of State Politics in India*, Delhi, 1969, pp. 79-127; J.R. Siwach, *Haryana*, pp. 88-112 and Shri Ram Sharma, *Haryana ka Itihas* (Hindi), Rohtak, 1974, p. 120.

13. For the crucial role which this group played in the Punjab politics, see Prem Chowdhry, "Sir Chhotu Ram: An Evaluation of his Role in Punjab Politics, 1924-1945," *The Punjab Journal of Politics*, Amritsar, Vol. VII, No. 2, 1983, pp. 126-50.

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partly of course due to their small numerical strength, but also because of widespread factionalism among them. United, Haryana group could have made some impact and acted as a strong pressure group as it had done so successfully under the British,<sup>13</sup> but divided they ended up by actively siding in the factional fights of the Congress Party in Punjab, leading to breakaway groups organising splinter parties as early as in 1954, like the Gandhi Janta Party and the Haryana Lok Samiti.<sup>14</sup> After a while they rejoined the Congress. Such attempts by the dissidents never ceased throughout.<sup>15</sup>

Haryana Congress Party, therefore, from 1947-66 could hardly be expected to play the role of the ruling party. Riven with factions and infighting, it merely provided fodder to other active dissidents in the Punjab government to topple ministries. No dynamic leadership arose to take advantage of their numerical strength-leading to perpetuation of unhealthy political traditions and comparative neglect of this part of Punjab in all spheres.

### III

#### Ambivalence of Zamindars

This neglect and backwardness of Haryana, affected first and foremost the richer strata of Haryana rural society. They came to resent the Congress attitude. It is among them that the demand for a separate state arose first, indirectly supporting the demand of a separate Punjabi Suba.<sup>16</sup> In Haryana, this demand was, among others, opposed by the the Congress. The Congress members of Haryana, beyond highlighting the backwardness of this region during a debate on the Report of States' Reorganisation on Committee in December 1955, did not support the

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14. *Gandhi Janta Party* : Founded in 1954 by Pandit Shri Ram Sharma and Shri Chand, nephew of Chhotu Ram and a member of the erstwhile Zamindar Party. This party put up a few candidates in the 1957 elections but all of them lost their deposits. The founding members rejoined the Congress.

*Haryana Lok Samiti* : In the wake of Hindi agitation in 1957-58, Sher Singh, a former minister of Punjab, was expelled from the Congress. He founded this party just before the 1962 election. The party then won one Parliamentary and six Assembly seats. However, once Haryana was created as a separate state, Sher Singh and his supporters rejoined the Congress, bringing the party to an end. See J.R. Siwach, *Haryana*, as in n. 8.

15. For details of dissident groups forming breakaway parties, see Shri Ram Sharma, *Haryana Ka Itihas*, as in f. n. 8, p. 138.

16. Baldev Raj Nayar, "Punjab," in Myron Weiner (ed.), *State Politics in India*, Princeton, 1968, pp. 435-502.

demand of a separate state.<sup>17</sup> They in fact insisted that any such scheme being based on religious grounds would be a threat to 'national unity' and to the secular state. Many dissident rural Congressites, however, backed this fully. Yet, significantly when a separate state was created, they were side stepped in favour of those who had opposed it. This fact was to have its own fall-out as we shall see later.

The surplus producing landowning state of Haryana had historically been anti-Congress. It had indeed formed the backbone of the Unionist Party from 1920 to 1946.<sup>18</sup> This group was left rudderless at the complete collapse of the party in 1946 elections. After that there was a kind of political vacuum as there was no party or individual who could take over their united command.

In fact, after independence, for a short while, this strata of zamindars "did not want to be identified with Sir Chhotu Ram's Party,"<sup>19</sup> and although it is undeniable that, by and large, they had remained traditionally anti-Congress for a long time, but it is also true that they were also traditionally pro-government or pro-ruling party. In view of the changed circumstances and the fact that the state, controlled by the Congress Party was not merely a political instrument but also an active agent with vast economic resources at its command and rights of direct intervention in these fields needed so urgently by the richer strata for its own development, could not but count with them. The two decades following independence, saw the foundation of future Green Revolution being prepared,<sup>20</sup> leading to multifold increases in productivity with introduction of irrigation, superior yielding crops, consolidation of holdings, nutrients, pesticides, and tractors, etc. The accumulative changes resulted in making agriculture profitable and investment in it worthwhile, and this strata proved to be the major recipient of wide-scale

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17. *Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol. X, Part II, 22 December 1955, See debate on the Report of the States' Reorganization Committee.
  18. For details, see Prem Chowdhry, "Sir Chhotu Ram : An Evaluation of his Role in Punjab Politics, 1924-45," as in f. n. 8.
  19. Interview with Ram Mehar Hooda, Rohtak, 17 June 1986 ; born 1933 in village Makrauli-Kalan in district Rohtak ; B.A.,LL.B., Jat College, Rohtak, practices law at the district level. He and his brother jointly own a land holding of 25 *bighas* in their ancestral village. Hooda also commented that in the aftermath of independence, it was widely feared that "Chhotu Ram's name will not get them any votes." So much so that immediately after independence, Shri Chand, the nephew of Chhotu Ram, did not even celebrate his uncle's birthday on the Basant Panchmi day, which had been celebrated with great enthusiasm earlier.

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changes introduced in Haryana after independence.

However, it has not been established that the groups which have benefited economically, especially the landowning classes, have provided greater political support to the Congress party. Therefore, it would be a wrong notion to hold that the Congress in Haryana has necessarily gained from economic development. The basic pattern of economic development had been introduced in selected areas, depending upon the economic viability of the region, holding, as well as the landowners.<sup>21</sup> In the continuing predominant agricultural economy of the state, this has been regulated on certain given norms and set patterns which have been, by and large, assumed to remain operative, regardless of any change in the complexion of the political party forming the government. Therefore, economic benefits and growth have not guaranteed political support from the beneficiaries. Political advantage of those benefits could be had only if the beneficiaries could be convinced that the other parties would not be able to further their interests. Moreover, individuals forming these political parties at the local and regional levels are themselves fluctuating in their adherence to a particular party. Frequent changes have not allowed them to identify these benefits with the party, but with themselves, the party complexion notwithstanding. In view of this, in Haryana, economic benefits and growth have not been necessarily associated with the Congress as such and consequently they have not been substituted for its political policy. In this connection, the Bansi Lal regime dating 1967 to 1975 and coinciding with the coming in of green revolution, is a case in point. The credit of this all round prosperity was taken personally by Bansi Lal who projected himself as 'the man of progress' and 'vision' rather than the Congress.<sup>22</sup> In fact, there has never been an active political strategy followed by the Congress which might have converted higher incomes into political support for the party in power. With the result, the major beneficiaries have shown over the years, unpredictable behaviour and erratic attitude, more so because of the role which money—a direct result of the Green Revolution—has come to play in purchasing favours from those wielding political and administrative power.

20. See G.K. Chadha, *The State and Rural Economic Transformation : The Case of Punjab, 1950-85*, New Delhi, 1986, pp. 22-54.

21. Biplab Das Gupta, "India's Green Revolution," *Economic and Political Weekly*, February 1977, Annual Number, pp. 241-60.

22. Muni Lal, *Profile of a Chief Minister : A Biography of Bansi Lal*, New Delhi, 1975, pp. 79-118.

## IV

**Further Alienation : Zamindars and other social groups**

Apart from the lack of identification by the richer strata of zamindars with the Congress, there seems to have been active alienation of many of the landowners. This was due to the popular association of the Congress in this region with the Scheduled Castes, denigrately known as the *Kamins*. The Congress had been paying special attention to the untouchables and agricultural labourers in this region right from the 1920s.<sup>23</sup> Several secret police reports from this region show how the Congress was able to successfully take up the *begar* (forced labour) issue and get the support of the *Kamins* both to the landowners and government officials.<sup>24</sup> The active work of the Congress among the untouchables of this region bore political fruit. The 1937 and 1946 elections showed the victory of the candidates supported by the Congress in the reserved constituencies. In fact, very early after independence, the Congress disparagingly came to be known among the zamindars of this region as "*Kamino Ki Party*."<sup>25</sup> This epithet is an indication of the direction towards which the Congress-Zamindar relationship was shaping.

The landowners who, under the British, had exercised unprecedented power in the rural areas suddenly felt confined and checked by the government machinery in their habitual dealings with the scheduled castes. After independence, the latter had started to rely a great deal on the village *Thanedar* (Police Officer), who had been issued special instructions to take action and heed all their complaints.<sup>26</sup> Whether an action was taken or not is besides the point. The fact that such instructions were issued was enough to antagonise the landowners who held the Congress responsible for "the changed attitude and behaviour of the *Kamins*."<sup>27</sup> In certain cases action was also taken. This was pointed out by Godha Harijan from village Sanghi of Rohtak district who, after cataloguing the "*Zamindar Atyachar*" (Tyranny) on the scheduled castes, maintained:

23. See *Confidential Files from the Superintendent's Office, Rohtak District, Haryana*, F. No. 6A and K.W.
24. All the issues of the *Haryana Tilak*, 1923-1947, deal with the work of the Congress among the untouchables in the South-east Punjab. The *Haryana Tilak* was a weekly newspaper established in Rohtak by the Congress leader Shri Ram Sharma.
25. Ram Mehar Hooda, *interview*, 17 June 1986.
26. Tribune, Chandigarh, 7 October 1970, see "Haryana police to be more mobile," p. 3.
27. Ram Mehar Hooda, *interview*, Rohtak, 17 June 1986.

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*Ab humain hath laga kar to dekho* (try and trouble us now).<sup>28</sup> Initially, the feeling of *Congress humain bachayegi* (the Congress will save us) among the scheduled castes was widespread.

The richer landowners resentment increased enormously in the wake of land ceiling legislation, propagated by the Congress as a law which would lead to the confiscation of surplus land from the landowners for redistribution among the scheduled castes and the landless. Whatever may have been the fate of the land ceiling legislation,<sup>29</sup> it was its perception which mattered. The landowners became fearful of losing their lands. They were often given to remark:<sup>30</sup>

*Hamari zamin sub Chamaron ko de di jayegi*  
(Our land will be given to the Chamars.)

This had its natural supplement :

*Chand Ram ko vote nahin denge*  
(We shall not vote for Chand Ram or the Congress.)

An interesting piece of advice tendered by a landowner to his grandson in the mid 50s, shows the real fear which the landowners had come to experience regarding their lands<sup>31</sup>

*"Are padh le, Congress ek khood bhi na chhodegi"*  
(Study hard, as the Congress will not leave any land with us).

The perception among the scheduled castes, which worked to alienate the landowners is interestingly summed up in a very popular *Geet* sung by the Chamar women. It went as follows:<sup>32</sup>

28. Interview by the author with Godha, a Harijan, from village Sanghi, 12 July 1984. Godha said, "Zamindars used to be very tyrannical towards us. We have been saved because of the Congress. Even drinking water was given to us from the leaf of *Aak* tree. We were never touched by hand. Even if we had fever, they used their feet to feel the pulse. We were allowed to go into the interior of the house with crop loads, but never without it. We used to be beaten up frequently. Now we are safe. Try and beat us now." The opinion may be a bit biased and exaggerated, but its essence is true.
29. Most landowners escaped it. See Government of India, *Report of the National Commission on Agriculture*, Pt. 15, New Delhi, 1976 ; Wolf Ladejinsky, "Land Ceiling and Land Reforms," *EPW*, Feb. 1972, pp. 401-08.
30. Narrated by Khem Chand, a leading *Sangi* and a *Bhajni* 65 years old from village Govad, district Sonapat, 15-16 October 1988.
31. Interview with Khem Chand Rathi, New Delhi, 24 May 1986 ; born 1912, Rajlugarhi village, district Sonapat, currently practicing law in the Supreme Court. He is an avowed Arya Samajist and familiar with the kind of politics this region has experienced since the colonial days.
32. Khem Cand, *interview*, Sonapat, 15-16 October 1988.

*Dhunge dhunge keyar, diwayega Chand Ram*

Chand Ram (a Congress leader and a Chamar by caste), will get us good low lying agricultural land).

The name of Chand Ram may be substituted with that of the Congress.

This is not to say that the continued domination of landowners and other socio-economic pressures exercised by the landowners and the inability of the government in power headed by the Congress has not alienated many among the scheduled castes. Moreover, even they are not given to act as a homogeneous unit. There are sub-divisions among them. The Chamars, for example, are numerically and economically stronger than the other scheduled castes in Haryana. Even under the British, some of them had started to emerge as the *sanjhis* (share croppers).<sup>33</sup> Over the years there has been strengthening of their position, mostly because they have succeeded in cornering a greater share of political and economic spoils than the rest of them. Chamars have also been usually selected as candidates for the reserved constituencies by the Congress. So much so that in the 1967 election Dhanaks and Balmikis contested from the reserved constituencies as independents; with the help of those among the zamindars, who were anti-Congress, they were able to defeat the Congress candidates.<sup>34</sup> Besides, at the time of voting several factors operate. For example, some of them are compelled to follow the landowners' dictates, through some pressure or the other. Many may actually feel as some of them opined:<sup>35</sup> "We have nothing to do with the *Raj* (Government). We live under the patronage of the zamindars we shall vote according to their directions."

These differences have resulted in a vote-split of the scheduled castes. The public appearances of these differences has led many Haryana politicians to hope for a successful emergence of new political alliances.<sup>36</sup>

33. *India Office Records*, London, Proceedings of the Punjab Government : P/7841, 1908, 59, p. 11.
34. B.B. Sinha, "The Fourth General Election in Haryana," in S.P. Verma and Iqbal Narain (eds.), *Fourth General Elections in India*, New Delhi, 1968, pp. 201-20.
35. Interview taken by Madan Gandhi. I am grateful to Prof. Madan Gandhi, Maharishi Dayanand University of Rohtak, for supplying me with his interview notes collected for his study of the 1977 Haryana Assembly Election, an ICSSR project.
36. See the statement of Swami Indervesh, a Lok Dal M.P. to Prabhash Joshi, *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 18 May 1982, p. 1. An alliance between anti-Congress Jats and Chamars was visualised to bring about a complete rout of the Congress in almost every village.

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These breaches in the scheduled castes' support have led the newspapers also to conclude that "the Congress monopoly of the Harijan votes has ended."<sup>37</sup> It will be difficult to entirely agree with the above observation for a large number of them continue to vote for the Congress. And the one time when the majority of them voted *against* the Congress was in 1977 election, following the extraordinary circumstances created by the emergency period excesses.

Regarding political adherence of other social groups in Haryana, equal if not more confusion prevails. For example, no longer can the historical support of the urban classes for the Congress be taken for granted. Many urban Congress voters have now got converted to the Jan Sangh. This all-India party took its birth in Punjab just a few months before the first general elections. It stood for the revival of Hindu culture and the Hindu Rashtra.<sup>38</sup> Its major appeal was to a large number of displaced persons, both Hindus and Sikhs, who continue to be known as 'Punjabis' or 'refugees.' They came over to Haryana in the wake of partition and settled down in the towns of Hissar, Rohtak, Karnal, Ambala, Gurgaon and Mohindergarh.<sup>39</sup> Having suffered a great deal at the hands of Muslim fanatics, they proved very receptive to this party, specially so, as delays in resettlement, allotments, slow implementation of rehabilitation plans, inefficiency, nepotism, corruption, etc., created disaffection against the Congress government.<sup>40</sup> In fact, in ten years since 1952, the Party had doubled its seat acquisition as well as its popular vote.<sup>41</sup> Over the years, the Jan Sangh, renamed in 1979 as the Bhartiya Janta Party, has claimed some support even from among those landowners who are settled in the cities.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand,

37. *Tribune*, Chandigarh, 27 May 1982, p. 8. It was also pointed out that in the Sixth Haryana Assembly out of the seventeen Harijan members, only five were with the Congress (I); nine were with the Lok Dal, one was with the BJP, and two were independents.
38. Bodh Raj Sharma, "Punjab", in S.V. Kogekar and R.L. Park (ed.), *Reports on the Indian General Elections 1951-52*, Bombay, Popular Book Depot, 1956, pp. 135-50.
39. Total number of Hindus and Sikhs who came into Haryana; Hissar, 127, 657; Rohtak, 123, 644; Karnal, 250, 471; Ambala, 188, 892; Gurgaon, 84, 587; Mohindergarh, 4,944. See *Census of India, Punjab, 1951*, Vol. VIII. Part I, A, p. LXVI.
40. Satya M. Rai, *Partition of Punjab*, New Delhi, 1965, p. 201.
41. Govt. of India, *Report on the General Elections in India*. See 1952, 1957, 1962, Vol. II, Statistical.
42. B.B. Sinha, "The Fourth General Election in Haryana", pp. 201-220.



there is also evidence to suggest that many among the displaced persons have voted for the Congress from time to time.<sup>43</sup> All this has greatly confused the earlier pattern of the Congress commanding the urban support. On the whole, one can only repeat that in Haryana no social group is clearly identifiable with any political party.

## V

**Government Measures : Further alienation of Land owners**

Certain government measures were also responsible for increasing the feeling of alienation generally among the landowning classes. This was the Hindu Code Bill of 1956. Two of its provisions had direct bearing on the rural society and many of the landowners came to the forefront in active opposition. One was the Hindu Succession Act, which gave equal rights of inheritance to the male and female heirs. Under this, for the first time, daughters, sisters, widows and mothers could inherit land with full proprietary rights to its disposal.<sup>44</sup> Punjab, interestingly, was among those states in India which had been in full favour of the Hindu Code Bill. The Punjab Congress attitude, which side stepped the traditions of rural society, was resented and objected to vociferously by the landowners of Haryana. After the Bill, the general atmosphere in the rural areas was one of the sharp critic of the Congress. Among the Congressites, "the reigning Brahmins and Banias—mostly urbanites—were accused of not understanding the rural problems."<sup>45</sup> This Act became an important lesson for the intense dislike of the Congress by a large number of landowners. So removed was the Congress from what the landowners were feeling that the Congress Member of Parliament, Ranbir Singh, representing the constituency of Rohtak, showed not even the remotest reflection of this resentment in his speech on the Hindu Code Bill in the Lok Sabha. On the contrary he supported the Bill.<sup>46</sup>

Ever since the passing of the Act, the opposition has been mounting. The landowners of Haryana are unanimous about the urgency of

43. Des Raj Dua, "Measurement of Party Competition at Polling Booth Level—A Case Study of 1980 Parliamentary Elections in Rohtak Parliamentary Constituency", M.Phil dissertation, Department of Political Science, Maharishi Dayanand University, Rohtak, June 1981.

44. For details of this Act, see the Hindu Succession Act No. XXX of 1956 in Sunderlal T. Desai, *Mulla Principles of Hindu Law*, Bombay, N.M. Tripathi Ltd., 13th edition, 1966.

45. Hardwari Lal, interview, Delhi, 19 March 1985, 78 years old, Member of Parliament, Rohtak.

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abolishing it. Attempts towards it in 1967 in the form of a unanimous resolution and in 1979 in the form of an Amendment Bill have all been defeated by the Centre.<sup>47</sup> The latest attempt of the Lok/Janta Dal Chief Minister Devi Lal in August 1989, has had to be withdrawn even before being introduced.<sup>48</sup> Once again in the minds of the landowners of Haryana, the Congress, dominating the Central Government, thwarting the landowning interests, has been underlined.

The second measure, also intensely disliked, was the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, which legalised the idea of divorce.<sup>49</sup> It provided both females and males with certain grounds to dissolve the marriage. The *Bhajnik* and *Pracharak* (singers and preachers), given to commenting on the contemporary realities, reflected the wrath and conflict evoked by this measure in a highly dramatised conversational piece created and propagated in the aftermath of the Act.<sup>50</sup>

One old woman to Nar Singh Bhajni : (*Beta Nar Singh, Hindu Code Bill ke sai* (Son, what is the Hindu Code Bill)).

Bhajni : "*Tai aaj tu mere tau ke paas kal use chhod tu mere ghar aajaa, yo Hindu Code Bill sai.*" (Aunt, today you are living with my uncle, tomorrow you can leave him and start living with me. This is what the Hindu Code Bill means).

Customarily, divorce was not unknown in the past, but the cases were rare and nearly always emanated from the man's side. The man generally left his wife with her parents called *tayag* (renunciation),<sup>51</sup> and never called her back. The 1955 Act upset this cultural pattern. It gave the wife a right to initiate divorce which violated the well recognised cultural norms of male authority and respect for the husband.

As seen, there was enough ammunition in the Independent era to keep the anti-Congress feelings of the landowners alive. With the result, many of them who were in a position to dominate the economy of a village became vocally anti-Congress. They exercised their hold on the electoral behaviour of the rest of them in such a way that many villages

46. Kiran Divendra, *Changing Status of Indian Women*, pp. 26.

47. *Haryana Vidhan Sabha Debates*, 25 Sept. 1979.

48. *Tribune*, Chandigarh, 11 Aug. 1989, see editorial "Devi Lal's About turn", p. 4.

49. Govt. of India, *The India Code*, New Delhi, Ministry of Law, 1956, Vol. II, Part IV, pp. 149-56.

50. Narrated by Ram Meher Hooda, Rohtak, 17 June 1986.

51. E. Joseph, *Customary Law of the Rohtak District*, Lahore, Superintendent, Govt. Printing, 1911, p. 40; also Govt. of Punjab, *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, 1910, Lahore, Superintendent, Govt. printing, 1911, p. 58.

saw almost *en-bloc* voting for their chosen candidate and against the Congress. Villages like Ismailia, Khekra, or Barhana, of Rohtak district are known to have almost always voted against the Congress.<sup>52</sup> A booth-wise study of 1980 Parliamentary election confirms this by showing incredible results.<sup>53</sup> It shows a total of 751 booths in the Rohtak Parliamentary constituency ; out of these 134 booths showed 80 to 100 per cent votes being polled for the Lok Dal candidate. In the other 323 booths, 60 to 79 per cent votes went the same way. This incredibly high percentage which covered 60.82 per cent of polling booths, ran in some villages as high as between 90 and 99 per cent. This factor shows the very real socio-economic dominance being extended into political field by the dominant landowners who refused even to allow the Congress flag to be unfurled or any Congress meeting to take place in the village *Chaupal*<sup>54</sup> (assembly platform). In many places the Congress found it difficult to campaign.<sup>55</sup> Many of them also indulged in bullying, frightening and intimidating the lower classes, whose sympathies might have been well known to be with the Congress.<sup>56</sup> Some of the Jat dominated constituencies have been notorious for this.<sup>57</sup> The introduction of mobile booths and police guards and extra protection given to the scheduled castes of certain villages during election times is a pointer in this case. Although, the ways in which this domination came to be exercised have not been academically investigated, the unique phenomenon of almost

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52. Hardwari Lal, *interview* Delhi, 19 March 1985.

53. Des Raj Dua, "Measurement of Party Competition", the booth-wise results were accounted for the first time in 1952. This practice was discontinued after 1952 and renewed only in the Mid-term Lok Sabha elections of January 1980.

54. Author's interview with the village elders drawn from the richer landowning families of the villages of Asan, Kansala, Sanghi; Kaloi, Makrauli and Dharmar of Rohtak district, December 1984.

55. *Times of India*, New Delhi, 1 January 1980, p. 6.

56. If the candidate supported by the dominating landowners, for whatever reason, i.e., *Got* or factional politics, happened to be a Congress candidate, the lower castes and classes which mostly overlapped in this region were allowed to vote freely. If not then various measures, like getting their votes polled in advance, booth capturing, impersonation, hounding them in the fields till the duration of the poll, and threats of boycott were effected. Considering the continuing economic dependence of these castes and classes on the landowners, these measures were, and continue to be, effective. Observation of the author through direct participation in the six Assembly elections and one Lok Sabha election from 1962 to 1984.

57. Hardwari Lal *interview*, Delhi, 19 March 1985.

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en-bloc voting in some villages has brought certain prominent features to the surface, i.e., utter confusion in tracing out the roots of support for the Congress or any other political party among the rural society at large. Such a phenomenon has also lent enough credence to the general prevailing perception of the landowners being 'anti-Congress,' as it successfully hides the role which richer landowners might have played in determining the voting pattern of entire villages.

### VI

#### Role of Propaganda : The Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj has been another important factor in the projection of an 'anti-zamindar' image of the Congress. As early as in 1921, the majority of the Arya Samajists in this State had been drawn from among the landowning strata.<sup>58</sup> In its early days under the British, the Arya Samaj had provided a good recruiting ground to the Congress in Punjab and its Haryana region, but Chhotu Ram's political dominance has effected a change in Haryana's Arya Samajists' adherence in the Congress.<sup>59</sup> And Although, over the years, the Arya Samajists have come to have different political affiliations, the Arya Samaj *upadeshiks* (preachers) and *bhajnis* (singers) after independence, became very active in spinning popular *geets* (songs) and *bhajans* (religious rhymes), all fairly critical of the Congress. Their kind of popular propaganda at the village level in the days when the *bhajan mandlis* (singing parties) alone provided major source of entertainment and social get-together has had its effect on the minds and perceptions of the mostly illiterate ruralities of Haryana. Starting in the early 50s, such songs were churned out in thousands. They were set to the popular hit tunes of the day and continue to be remembered to this day.<sup>60</sup>

One of the earliest *geets* of the Arya Samaj *upadeshiks* set out to ridicule the secular concept of the Congress ran as follows :

*Dharm karam pooja path sab ka band gate hai*

*secular state hai yeh, secular state hai*

(Under secular state, all religion is banished).

58. *Census of India, Punjab, 1921*, Vol. XV, Part I, Report, p. 181.

59. For reasons behind this change and the ways in which this change was effected, see Prem Chowdhry, *Punjab Politics*, Chapter V.

60. I am grateful to Shri Ram Mehar Hooda, for providing me with a rich collection of popular *geets* of the time, which were commonly sung by the *upadeshiks* and *bhajnis*. Ram Mehar Hooda, *interview*, 17 June 1986.

Another hit song of the 50s "*O tera keya kehna*" (Oh ! what to say about you) provided the words and melody for denouncing certain governmental measures. For example, the government's encouragement to poultry farming and cash rewards of Rs. 200 and Rs. 500 were projected as attempts to popularise egg eating. This was enough to shock the sensibilities of the vegetarian populace. The song went as follows :—

*Murgi per de rekkha inam, O terā keya kehna*

(O government what to talk of you, you distribute rewards on the breeding of hens).

The song went on to show that cows were left out of any reward distribution or recognition. Very subtly, the low importance imparted to the cow by the Congress government was suggested to the cow loving and revering Haryanavis. In fact, the question of cow-slaughter and a demand of a ban on it was to provide a great deal of fodder in 1954-55, both to the Arya Samajist and the Sanatan Dharmis.<sup>61</sup> In the ensuing *Gau Raksha Andolan* (cow protection agitation), the landowners took a major part. In 1955, the government finally agreed to bring in such a measure.<sup>62</sup> Again in May 1957, the *Hindi Andolan* was launched under the overall direction of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha.<sup>63</sup> About 30,000 volunteers participated in the agitation and some 8,000 were arrested.<sup>64</sup> During the agitation, many Congressmen were threatened and physically assaulted.<sup>65</sup> And after six months of jail, another slogan which could be heard was :<sup>66</sup>

61. Shiv Lal, *Elections to India's State Legislatures since 1952*, New Delhi, The Election Archives, 1978, see Haryana State.

62. Shri Ram Sharma, *Haryana ka Itihas*, pp. 131-33.

63. Hindi agitation was the off-spring of the regional formula, called the Sachar Formula of October 1949, which divided Punjab into two regions, Punjabi and Hindi regions. According to this, Punjabi or Hindi was to be the medium of instruction in all schools in the respective regions upto matriculation and the other language was to be taught as *compulsory* language from primary stage to matriculation. This language policy of the government evoked a lot of resentment. And Hindi Agitation was launched to remove any compulsion in the teaching of the languages. For details, see Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in the Punjab*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, pp. 230, 307-08 ; Pandit Mohan Lal, *Disintegration of Punjab*. Chandigarh, 1984, pp. 69-87.

64. Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics*, p. 38.

65. Pandit Mohan Lal, *Disintegration of Punjab*, pp. 69-87.

66. Khem Chand, *interview*, Sonapat, 15-16 Oct. 1988.

*Kutte ko vote de denge, Congress ko nahin denge*  
(We'll rather waste our vote than give it to the Congress).

The failure of this agitation also led to the Congress being held publicly responsible for attempting to impose Punjabi on them. With ever escalating Arya Samaj inflammatory propaganda at the village level, anti-Congress feeling was clearly visible. The Congress as well as Jawahar Lal Nehru stood generally condemned rather early after independence. This can be seen in another popular song which went as follows :<sup>67</sup>

*Jiyo Jawaharlal, desh ki khoob bigari chaal*  
*O' tera keya kehna*  
*Dilli ka Ashoka Hotel kaun si samassya ka hal,*  
*jis ko di Pradhanta, O' tera keya kehna*  
*Tujh per ek jwab nahin hai, is ka tujhe sawal*  
*O' tera keya kehna.*

(Long live Jawaharlal who has given a wrong direction to the nation. The Ashoka Hotel of Delhi, given primacy above all, is no solution to any problem. You, Jawaharlal, have no answer to our problems at all.)

During the general elections of 1957, large posters appeared in the villages which quoted Mahatma Gandhi as having said.<sup>68</sup>

*Safed topi walon ko praja chun chun ke maregee*  
(Public will beat up the Congressites one by one).

## VII

### Underlining of the Image : The 'anti-Jat' Congress

Emanating out of its general 'anti-zamindar' image as well as out of this region's historical past, has been the 'anti-Jat' image of the Congress; another popularly projected and fairly widely accepted image in Haryana. This has importance in this region as the Jats form the single largest landowning caste and are found to be dominating in majority of its districts.<sup>69</sup> This 'anti-Jat' image gained substantial credence when the

67. Ram Mehar Hooda, *interview*, Rohtak, 17 June 1986.

68. Khem Chand Rathi, *interview*, New Delhi, 24 May 1986.

69. For Jat domination in this region, see Prem Chowdhry, "Jat Domination in South-East Punjab : Socio-Economic Basis of Jat Politics in a Punjab District," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. XIX, no. 304, December 1983; pp. 325-346. For the concept and features of 'dominant caste,' see M.N. Srinivas, "The Dominant Caste in Rampura," *American Anthropologist*, Feb. 1959, pp. 1-16.

Jat Congressmen like Devi Lal and Sher Singh who had been in the forefront of demanding a separate Haryana State, were thrust aside for Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, a Brahmin, who became the first Chief Minister of the new state,<sup>70</sup> setting aside any 'Jat claim.' A great deal of resentment ensued, because Bhagwat Dayal Sharma as the then President of the Punjab Congress, had been the most vehement opponent of this demand.<sup>71</sup>

Although seen as 'anti-Jat,' the choice of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma was more due to the inability of Jats to throw up an acceptable leadership. The existence of only weak and indecisive leadership among the Jat Congressmen, did not even allow them to unite together as a group in the Assembly. They tended to act more as individuals vying for power and positions through existing factions of the Congress. This lacunae in the Jat leadership led to the Congress's main stewards being drawn even after independence, from among the Brahmin and the Bania castes. Devi Lal and Sher Singh, the so-called 'Jat leaders' of the Congress, indulging in frequent defections and counter-defections and active participants in factional politics, could never come to exercise the hold which Bhagwat Dayal Sharma had built up over the majority of Congress legislators as well as the Congress High Command.<sup>72</sup> A Brahmin domination of Haryana politics, with Ram Kishan Gupta, a Bania, as his right hand; who as the Haryana Congress President, controlled the Congress organization, became chiefly responsible for perpetuating the myth of the Congress being 'anti-Jat' and thus 'anti-zamindar.'

The lack of 'Jat representation' at various levels was also pointed out as a proof of the Congress being 'anti-Jat.'<sup>73</sup> Although, even

70. Govt. of India, *Report on the Parliamentary Committee on the Demand for Punjabi Suba*, New Delhi, 1966, p. 17.

71. During the 1952 general election the Congress Party had firmly opposed the demand for a separate state, Punjab or Haryana, and consequently was able to win considerable 'Punjabi refugees' and Harijan votes in Haryana who had also been against this move. For details, see Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics*,

72. p. 319. For details of factional politics and politics of defections, see Subhash C. Kashyap, "Politics of Defection" as in f. n. 12; J.R. Siwach "Haryana," as in f. n. 8. For Bhagwat Dayal Sharma's dominance being seen as 'anti-Jat,' see *Link*, New Delhi, Vol. II, No. 4, 1 Sept. 1968, p. 27; 15 Sept. 1968, pp. 15-16

73. I have personally come across a large number of Jats drawn from different walks of life and strata, majority of whom insist that the Congress had been 'anti-Jat.' It was pointed out that the Jats were found in lower jobs alone, i.e., *chowkidar*,

[Continued on page 123]

#### MOULDING OF POPULAR PERCEPTIONS : IMAGE OF THE CONGRESS

Comparatively, the Congress at no time showed insignificant number of Jat representation at the assembly or the ministerial level.<sup>74</sup> Yet, the charge because of inclusion of "insignificant Jats," struck home.<sup>75</sup> It was partly to counteract this kind of propaganda that Bansi Lal, an unknown Jat of no political stature, was selected as the Chief Minister after the 1968 mid-term poll. His installation, superimposed by the Congress High Command, seemingly made a mockery of the 'anti-Jat' charge of the opposition, but he was soon declared to be "anti-Jat" himself.<sup>76</sup>

The 'anti-Jat' image of the Congress has not been an unmixed blessing, as the Congress would have lost a great deal by identifying too closely with the Jats. It would have certainly alienated other castes and closed other and wider avenues of support. Even the most opportunistic has been weary of this badge. That is one of the reasons why Devi Lal has always had to publicly denounce his being labelled as "Jat leader."<sup>77</sup> Interestingly, except for the Jats, no other caste has raised the caste slogan, as it would have had the counter effect of uniting the otherwise

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*Continued from the page 122]*

peon, school masters, etc. Ram Meher Hooda remarked that at best the Jats were found among the school masters. The same was disclosed by a *Times of India*, New Delhi, report dated 23 June 1983 titled "Guru Gram," on p. 3. According to this report based on a register prepared by the Gathwala Panchayat of Haryana, some 2,000 out of 4,500 teachers in the whole of Haryana, were Jat by caste. They were mostly junior basic teachers, qualified to man only primary schools; others were trained graduates, some post-graduates—others "shastri" or "prabhakar."

74. In the first ministry formed in the newly created Haryana state after the elections of February 1967, there were three Jats out of a total of ten ministers, i.e., 30 per cent, when the Jat Congress members were a total of 13 among 48 Congress members in the Assembly, i.e., 27.08 per cent. For details, see J.R. Siwach, "Haryana," as in f. n. 8.

75. Hardwari Lal, *interview*, Delhi, 19 March 1985.

76. Interestingly, many Jats insist that Bansi Lal was, in fact, 'anti-Jat.' Apart from showing that he was "ruling Haryana" through a small coterie of non-Jats mainly R.C. Mehtani and S.K. Misra, they also point out that no Jat could be seen to wield any authority or occupy a high position under him. So much so that in the 1972 elections he dealt the "most severe blow" to the Jats by fielding a non-Jat candidate from the Jat dominated constituency of Hissar. Moreover when he joined the Central Cabinet in 1975, he chose a Bania as his 'successor' not a Jat. Names of the interviewees are being held at their request. However, somewhat similar information exists in Janardhan Thakur, *All the Prime Minister's Men*, New Delhi, 1977, pp. 32-53.



split Jats in Haryana against them.<sup>78</sup> These contradictions notwithstanding, in the popular perception, the image of the Congress being 'anti-zamindar' is really not all that different from being 'anti-Jat.' Here it may well be remembered that Jats as the dominant landowning caste have given this region its main identifiable cultural characteristics. For example, the stereo type image of a Haryana male is that of a 'Jat'; denoting an 'uncouth' and 'uncultured' person. Moreover, then the language of this region in popular parlance is more often referred to as 'Jatu' than 'Haryanavi.'

In the final analysis, even the Jats like the other zamindars, whatever may be the general belief, have remained fluctuating in their commitment to any particular party. Their electoral behaviour being determined, apart from other considerations, by caste, *got*, factional and personality factors. These factors would need to be discussed in another paper.

#### Conclusion

Quite early, the historically risen image of the Congress came to be moulded more firmly in this region in the post-colonial period. The lack of Congress hold and that of its ideology in the rural society, the dominant Congress leadership, its deep factionalism, its attitude to this region's problems, the inability of the Congress to identify with certain beneficial policies, its legislative measures and other policies, which evoked adverse comments and extensive anti-Congress propaganda, have all combined in one way or the other to the moulding and strengthening of this initial 'anti-zamindar' image. Outside forces have been making their own contribution specially from the neighbouring states of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, dominated by anti-Congress forces of Charan Singh and Akalis. More recently, the 'Tikait Movement' of Western U.P. highlighting the Congress and its 'anti-zamindar' role has further underlined the widespread alienation of different sections of zamindars from the Congress. All these together have gone into strengthening the already perceived image of the Congress. More than any other political party, it is this image which needs to be fought by the Congress, as it is fast spreading elsewhere in India.

77. *Statesman*, New Delhi, 22 June 1977, p. 7.

78. Devi Lal to the correspondent of the *Times of India*, New Delhi, 9 Feb. 1978, p. 4.

## Master Tara Singh And Struggle For Sikh Representation 1920-47

MRS. RAJWANT KAUR BHULLAR\*

The struggle for representation has been a perennial issue in Punjab politics since the pre Independence days. It has been a central theme of many political movements and controversies. Sikhs struggled, for their representation on the strength of their distinct identity and important position in Punjab. In Punjab the Sikh under the fear psychosis of the Muslim domination, tried to secure adequate representation in the council to make themselves an effective force in provincial politics. But this struggle was not an isolated phenomenon. At the national level efforts were made to transfer political power from the British Government to Indian hands, So the political parties and the representative bodies felt deeply concerned about their relative position in the sharing and exercising power.

The struggle for Sikh representation was initially launched under the leadership of Master Tara Singh, who dominated Akali politics for about four decades. He contributed much to the movement in order to secure maximum advantage for his community at the minimum cost. For this purpose sometimes he co-operated with the Congress, and the other with the British Government. While participating in the national movement he kept an eye on the constitutional gains. The present paper is an attempt to assess the contribution of Master Tara Singh during the struggle for representation.

Master Tara Singh emerged as a leader of the Sikhs during Gurdwara Reform Movement, a powerful agitation which was started to liberate the Gurdwaras from the control of the corrupt Mahants. It was during this movement that Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (S. G. P.C.) and Shiromani Akali Dal were formed. During this movement Sikhs developed a passion for politics. Both Shiromani Akali Dal and the S.G.P.C. started raising voice for the Sikh demand for representation in Legislative council. From 1920 onwards Master Tara Singh's primary object was to secure a position of political leverage for Sikhs.<sup>1</sup> In those

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\*V. & P. O. Baba Bakala, District Amritsar.

days each community was struggling for its survival. Therefore there was a fear psychosis all around. In these circumstances Master Tara Singh became the chief spokesman of Sikh community and actively participated in various negotiations that took place between colonial authorities and representatives of Indian political opinions between 1930s and 1940s.<sup>2</sup>

In these negotiations Master Tara Singh's primary concern was to seek maximum representation and to ensure that no constitutional arrangement was enforced on the Sikhs which would subject them to the dominance of either the Muslims or the Hindus.<sup>3</sup>

In this struggle Master Tara Singh sided with the Congress in finding a solution of representation problem. But at the same time he was not prepared to accept any formula given by the Congress as it would not protect their interest in Punjab.<sup>4</sup>

With the settlement of the gurdwara problem the Sikhs diverted their attention towards their political disabilities. Sikhs were given 19.1% seats under the Montague Chelmsford reforms and this failed to satisfy the aspiration.<sup>5</sup>

The Hindu and the Muslim leadership in the beginning were opposed to the demand of separate representation for the Sikhs. Therefore, it is one of the reason that in the Lucknow pact (1916) Hindus and Muslims had completely ignored the Sikhs.<sup>6</sup>

The Congress too ignored the Sikh demand of separate representation in the Lucknow pact. But in 1927 when the Congress accepted the Muslim League's demand of joint electorates with reservation of seats in proportion to population, the Sikhs were also assured of adequate weightage in Punjab.<sup>7</sup> Therefore the Central Sikh League and the Shiromani Akali Dal boycotted Simon Commission and decided to participate in All parties Conference organised by the Congress in 1928. Sikh leaders including Master Tara Singh decided to oppose communal representation, but in case it was retained the Sikhs must be given 1/3

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1. J.S. Brar, 'Master Tara Singh and Demand for Sikh Homeland,' *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXI-II, Oct., 1987, p. 365.
  2. K. C. Gulati, *The Akalis Past and Present*, New Delhi, 1974, p. 146.
  3. J.S. Brar, *op. cit.* p. 365.
  4. K. L. Tuteja, *Sikh Politics*, Kurukshetra, 1984, p. 160.
  5. *The Tribune*, Lahore, Oct. 11, 1927.
  6. Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reforms in Sikh Shrines*, Anritsar, 1965, p. 39.
  7. *Report of Indian National Congress*, Madras Session, 1927.

share of representation in Punjab Legislative council.<sup>8</sup> The Nehru Committee Report did not find favour with Sikh leadership. The Sikhs had been denied what was given to the Muslims in the provinces in which they were in minority. Even Mahatma Gandhi was convinced that the 'Sikh objections' to the report were justified.<sup>9</sup> Master Tara Singh rejected the report, being injurious to Sikh interests and regretted that the Congress had ignored the Sikh aspirations. But he wanted to fight for the Sikh rights while remaining within the organisation.<sup>10</sup>

The Masterji again raised the issue of injustice to Sikhs in the Nehru Report at the Calcutta Congress session in December 1928 and had detailed discussions with Gandhi. However no compromise could be reached.<sup>11</sup> Master Tara Singh participated in Lahore Congress session 1929 where it was declared that Nehru Report had automatically been relapsed, and a resolution was passed. Thus Master Tara Singh was being elevated to the centre stage of Sikh politics.

The First Round Table Conference was opened on November 12, 1930 at London. Moderate Sikh leaders Ujjal Singh and Sampuran Singh represented Sikh community.<sup>12</sup> According to the memorandum submitted by the Sikh representatives, the Sikh wanted the same treatment as the Muslim minorities had received in other provinces i.e. 30% representation in Punjab.<sup>13</sup>

On March 5, 1931 Gandhi—Irwin pact was signed. Congress and Central Sikh League decided to participate in Second Round Table Conference. A deputation led by Master Tara Singh met Gandhi and presented him a charter of 17 demands of his community.<sup>14</sup> It was an attempt of the Sikhs to safeguard themselves against the Muslim rule, when Gandhi described their demands as communal. Master Tara Singh replied 'The only way to fight communalism is by counter demands of the same nature.'<sup>15</sup> When on August 16, 1932 Communal Award was announced, the Sikhs wanted the Congress to reject it as it went against the interests of the Sikhs. It was strongly condemned by the Sikhs.<sup>16</sup>

8. All Parties Conference, *Nehru Report*, pp. 17-21; *The Tribune*, Jan. 3, 1928.

9. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XX, 1920, pp. 462-63.

10. Durlabh Singh, *The Valient Fighter*, Lahore, 1942, p. 103.

11. K.K. Teteja, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

12. R. Coupland., *The Constitutional Problem of India*, Madras, 1944, p. 120.

13. *Jaykar Papers*.

14. *The Tribune*, March 22, 1931.

15. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. LXV, p. 399.

16. *Home Deptt. (Political)*, File 41/32.

The Sikhs also participated in the Unity Conference which was organised by Madan Mohan Malviya and Maulana Shaukat Ali at Allahabad on November 3, 1932 to find out an acceptable communal formula instead of Communal Award. In the conference Sikh agreed to accept the statutory majority of the Muslims in Punjab with joint electorates. In return the Sikhs were promised safeguard like a seat in the cabinet of the province. In the central Legislature they would also get 4.5% seats. In justification of the formula Master Tara Singh said, "We do not claim that the present settlement is quite satisfactory from the Sikh or the national point of view, but we do claim that it is far better for the Sikhs and the country than the Communal Award of the British Government..... To say briefly the statutory majority of the Muslims have been deprived of the poison of tyranny or oppression."<sup>17</sup>

The Government of India Act 1932 became law on August 4, 1935. The Sikhs strongly criticised the new constitutional scheme. As the main object of the Sikhs was to get rid of the Communal Award and to protect the interest of their Community.<sup>18</sup>

With the outbreak of the IInd World War the Sikhs being a martial people, got an opportunity to impress upon the Government for the protection of their interests in return of their services during the War. This created controversy between Master Tara Singh and the Congress leadership. Master Tara Singh wanted maximum mobilisation of the Sikhs in armed forces. In return the Akali demanded adequate protection for their community in any future constitutional developments, consequently Master Tara Singh believed that further political influence of his community largely depended upon the strength in the army.<sup>19</sup>

It was during these turbulent days of IInd World War that the Muslim League passed its resolution for a separate Muslim State. The Sikhs led by Master Tara Singh reacted furiously. At the U.P. Sikh conference held at Lucknow on April 15, 1940, he warned, "If the Muslim League wants to establish Pakistan, they will have to pass through the ocean of Sikh blood."<sup>20</sup> As the reaction to Muslim demand for Pakistan, some Sikh Individuals and groups raised the demand for a Sikh state or Khalistan more so to checkmate the Muslim demand.<sup>21</sup>

17. *The Tribune*, Nov. 3, 1932; Dec. 29, 1932; *M.S. Aney Papers*.

18. Mitra, *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol. II, 1935, pp. 311-12.

19. Gurcharan Singh, *Ankhi Surma*, Delhi, 1950, pp. 126-181.

20. V.V. Nagarkar, *Genesis of Pakistan*, Bombay, 1975, p. 324.

21. Kanwarjit Singh, *Master Tara Singh and Punjab Politics : A Study of Political Leadership* (Ph.D. Thesis), Amritsar, 1978, pp. 244-45.

On August 23, 1940 veteran Congress leader C. Rajagopalachari came out with a "supporting offer" to promote an agreement with the Muslim League. The Akalis under Master Tara Singh sharply reacted and described this attitude of the Congress unjust.<sup>22</sup>

The Cripps proposals announced in March 1942 conceived of India as a federal state with right of the units to secede, if they so desired. Master Tara Singh's reaction to these proposals was obvious. The 'Azad Punjab,' scheme was put forward by Master Tara Singh and other Sikh leaders, as an alternative to Cripps proposals.<sup>23</sup>

It soon became evident that Congress was tacitly accepting the partition of the country. C. Rajagopalachari presented his formula, with tacit approval of Mahatma Gandhi on July 10, 1944. At a meeting of leaders of all groups and parties, Mahatma Gandhi was strongly criticised and for the first time Master Tara Singh stated that the Sikhs were separate nation. Master Tara Singh was authorised to organise movement to the partition of Punjab. He appointed a sub committee to create effective liaison with all Sikh groups to form a Sikh united front.<sup>24</sup>

The Cabinet Mission plan was announced on May 16, 1946 during such a surcharged atmosphere. Master Tara Singh felt that the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan had been indirectly conceded. Under his leadership the Dal had negotiations with both the Congress as well as Mr. Jinnah. Master Tara Singh was prepared to agree to Pakistan, if Jinnah on his part would agree to Sikh State.<sup>25</sup> Master Tara Singh's ideas over the issues were precise and unambiguous. He told the Mission that he favoured a united India with some type of coalition Government of all communities. He felt that in the prevailing conditions of Hindu Muslim cleavage, the Sikhs would have a strong bargaining position. However, if at all, India was to be partitioned the Sikhs would prefer an Independent Sikh state with right to federate either with Hindustan or Pakistan.<sup>26</sup>

22. V.P. Menon, *Transfer of Powers in India*, Princeton, 1957, p. 91.

23. Correspondence between Master Tara Singh and Stafford Cripps vide Letters dated March 31, 1942; May 30, 1942; C.B. Birdwood, *A Continent Experiment*, London, 1945, p. 94.

24. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1981, pp. 252-53.

25. V.P. Menon, *op. cit.*, pp. 236, 272, B. R. Nayyar: *Minority Politics in the Punjab*, Princeton, 1966, pp. 89, 92.

26. Mohinder Singh Tej, "Master Tara Singh and Development of Sikh Politics," *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. 10, 1986, pp. 65-90.

Thus the Sikhs under the stewardship of Master Tara Singh took the Historic decision of remaining in the Indian Union, the decision that changed the course of political History of this part of sub-continent.

Credit goes to Master Tara Singh mainly for keeping up the struggle for Sikh representation and also for keeping the Sikhs in national mainstream. It is clear from the foregoing account that Master Tara Singh became the chief spokesman of Sikh Community during the struggle for Sikh representation and actively participated in negotiations with various commissions and Indian political leaders. As such he contributed immensely to the growth and protection of the separate identity of the Sikhs.

## The Role of the Sikhs in the National Freedom Struggle

DR JAGJIWAN MOHAN WALIA

The Sikhs played a prominent role in throwing off the British yoke. The struggle which commenced with sporadic and spontaneous risings against the British rule, gradually assumed the shape of a national movement with the objective of attaining independence.

Even in 1845, the army of the Lahore Durbar marched against the British forces chanting 'on the throne of Delhi would sit the army of the Guru.' Unlike the commanders who were treacherous, the Sikh soldiery inspired by lofty religious and national ideals were ready to sacrifice their lives for the glory of the Khalsa. During the second Anglo-Sikh War, Dewan Mulraj of Multan marched against the troops of Rajas Sher Singh and Chattar Singh only after the auspicious hour was fixed by Bhai Maharaj Singh. The latter egged on Rajas Sher Singh and Chattar Singh not to surrender to the British after the defeat by British forces. The result was that the Punjab was annexed to the British Dominions in March 1849.

After annexation, the Punjab was placed under a new administration. There is a general belief that the Sikhs set aside their hostile feelings within a few years of the annexation and quickly adjusted themselves in the new order.

This was due to the fact that the Sikhs detested the *Poorbia* soldiers due to their role in destroying the independence of the kingdom of the Punjab in 1845-46 and ultimate subjugation of the Punjab in 1848-49. "The *Poorbia* sepoys," writes Dr Ganda Singh, "as the soldiers of the Bengal army were then, and are still, called in the Punjab had not the moral courage to approach the Sikhs for co-operation and assistance against the British as they had themselves helped the British to destroy the independent kingdom of the Punjab in 1845-46 and reduce it to British subjection in 1848-49. As such, there was not much love lost between the *Poorbia* sepoys and the people of the Punjab. The offensive airs of the *Poorbia* garrison in the Punjab had been particularly galling to the

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\*Punjab State Archives, Patiala.



martial Sikhs."<sup>1</sup> The detestable attitude of the *Poorbia* soldiers deeply hurt the feelings of the Sikhs and this hatred could not be overcome within the short period.

The Sikhs assistance to the British has been misinterpreted. The fact is that the Punjab including the Sikhs looked to the British Government with distrust and resentment. As the whole population of the Punjab was disarmed, they could not defend themselves. Many of the Sikh Sardars who fought against the British were in prisons and many of them lived humbly. The *jagirs* of the *jagirdars* had been considerably decreased. After the disbanding of the Khalsa Army, a large number of the former soldiers began to cultivate the land. The reduction in the land revenue did not improve the condition of the peasantry as the Government laid stress on payment in cash. The fall in prices caused the reduction in profit from good harvests. Under the prevailing conditions, it was impossible to pay the land revenue in cash through the reduction was made several times. The social reforms introduced by the state greatly hurt the religious feelings of the Hindus and the Sikhs. The schools and colleges set up by the Government were suspected to be the agencies to convert people to Christianity. The Sikhs and Hindus viewed with distrust the proselytising activities of the Christian missionaries. Maharaja Dalip Singh was the most conspicuous convert.

The sepoys of the Bengal army of the East India Company rose in revolt in 1857. As they had been instrumental to conquer the Punjab and also as they formed a greater part of the army of occupation they were the objects of hatred. The Mughal Emperor's appeals did not appeal to the Sikhs as the Mughals persecuted the Sikhs as well as the Hindus alike. From Parliamentary Paper No 238 of 1859, it is evident that the Sikhs envisaged the restoration of the Sikh kingdom. It expresses the apprehensions of the authorities in unequivocal terms, "Universal revolt in the Punjab would have broken out if Delhi had not fallen soon into our hands." In the papers, it is mentioned that as detachment after detachment was moving towards Delhi from Punjab and cantonment after cantonment was being vacated, "then Punjabis realised how isolated they were from the rest of India. Then their minds passed from confidence to doubt, then to mistrust and then to disaffection. The last

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1. Ganda Singh, 'The Indian Mutiny of 1857 and the Sikhs,' *The Missionary*, Delhi, 1950, p. 35.

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symptom had begun to appear when Delhi fell."<sup>2</sup> As early as 18th May, 1857, John Lawrence was apprehensive of an uprising in the Punjab. He had once demurred, "I recollect their (Sikhs) strong nationality how completely they were demoralized for some twelve years before annexation, and how much they have to gain by our ruin."<sup>3</sup>

The intrepid Khalsa who had fought so bravely against the Mughals and steamed the tide of the Durrani invasions, would not have failed to take the field against the British if they had understood the significance of the uprising. There was peace and prosperity in the territory due to the settled Government of the British. They had not yet fully realized the British yoke when the Mutiny of 1857 broke out. Had the mutiny broken out few years later, the daring Khalsa would have taken the field against the British. Moreover, Maharaja Dalip Singh was loath to take any action against the British. About the Maharaja, Sir John Login wrote from castle Menzies in England on September 30, 1857, "the Maharaja has certainly no sympathy with the mutinous sepoys, nor any other wish than that we should effectually put them down—his feelings in our favour are not so strong as to overcome his natural indolence, or to tempt him to read to make many inquiries on the subject of the revolt."<sup>4</sup> Moreover, after the outbreak in India, "the Maharaja return to India had been put a stop to and he remained in England more for necessity than choice."<sup>5</sup>

Despite the Government's vigilance and repression, there were sporadic risings of the Sikhs. Many Sikh soldiers were hanged on the charge of seditious activities. At Ropar, Mohar Singh declared the end of the British rules, banned the cow-slaughter and proclaimed Khalsa Raj. He and his accomplices were hanged. At Sialkot, to quote the Parliamentary paper 239 of 1859, "Even the Punjabi military police revolted, treasury was looted, 12-Pounder gun taken away and the magazines blown up. The villagers of the neighbourhood also revolted and entered the city. Many village leaders were executed and about fifty of the villagers were flogged."<sup>6</sup>

On the whole, the Punjab remained peaceful. The rulers of the Cis-Sutlej Sikh states helped the British to suppress the revolt. They and

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2. Parliamentary Paper No. 238 of 1859, p. 27.

3. Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. II, London, 1883, p. 53.

4. Lady Login, *Sir John Login and Duleep Singh*, London, 1890, p. 409.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 421.

6. Parliamentary Paper No. 238 of 1859, p. 27.

all other Sikh leaders who rendered assistance were awarded titles and addition to their territorial possessions. Gordon has rightly observed, "Though the Khalsa has ceased to be a political power, it has entwined its military force with strong chord of loyalty and sympathy for the British Crown."<sup>7</sup>

About sixty years prior to the non-co-operation movement of Mahatma Gandhi, Guru Ram Singh of the Kukas launched the non-co-operation movement against the British Government. He fully realised that in order to oust the British, it was necessary to boycott the British manufactures as this cause loss to the British. Giani Pritam Singh is of the view that he was the greatest Sikh reformer after the extinction of the Sikh kingdom.<sup>8</sup> As the atmosphere of intrigues and counter-intrigues after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was repulsive to him. Baba Ram Singh left the service in the Lahore Army in 1845 and devoted himself to religious activities with a view to reform Sikhs. After the annexation, the zealous religious propagation of the Christian missionaries and the establishment of a string of slaughter houses for the supply of beef which were banned during the Sikh regime greatly hurt the feelings of the Punjabi Sikhs and Hindus and brought home to them the loss suffered by the Punjabis after annexation.

Baba Ram Singh laid the foundation of the Kuka Sect in 1857. In the first instance, the organisation was termed as the Sant Khalsa in order to distinguish it from other Sikhs. He asked his followers to lead pure and clean lives, avoid eating meat and drinking and to renounce such social customs as female infanticide, child marriage, etc. He laid stress on morality. Ghulam Bheekh writes, "One would have found any wicked person among the Kukas very rarely."<sup>9</sup> Kinchant writes about the religious beliefs of the Kukas, "Gobind Singh's *Grantha* is the only true one written by inspiration, and is the only sacred writing extant Gobind Singh is only Guru. Any person irrespective of caste or religion can be admitted a convert. Sodhis, Bedis, Mahants, Brahmans and such like are imposters, as none are Gurus except Gobind Singh. Devi Dwaras, Shib Dwaras and Mandirs are a means of extortion to be held in contempt and never visited. Idols and idolworship are insulting

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7. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, London, 1904, p. 222.

8. Pritam Singh, *Gurdwara Sudhar, Arthat Akali Lehar*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1957, p. 13.

9. Ghulam Bheekh, *Tarikh-i-Wakari*, Ms., p. 147.

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to God and will not be forgiven. Converts are allowed to read Gobind Singh's *Grantha* and no other book."<sup>10</sup>

He imparted military training to his followers. They boycotted the courts set up by the British and established the Panchayats to settle the disputes. He enjoined upon his followers to wear the hand spun cloth and discard the British goods. As a parallel to the British postal system the Kukas established their own postal system. They boycotted the schools set up by the British and sent their children to the indigenous schools where they were educated in mother-tongue. Ghulam Bheekh writes that during the lifetime of Baba Ram Singh several lakhs of people joined the Kuka-fold.<sup>11</sup>

Baba Ram Singh established contact with the rulers of states outside Punjab and Russia with a view to expel the British from the Punjab. Shiv Lal writes, "In order to make his political programme a success, Guru Ram Singh had spread his sphere of activity in the border states of Nepal, Bhutan and Kashmir. Contacts were made with the rulers through Namdhari embassies. Guru Ram Singh is also stated to have had close contacts with the Rani of Jhansi and other leaders of the 1857 rebellion. The Guru, even from jail exchanged letters with Russia through the Governor of Russian Turkistan."<sup>12</sup>

Due to the growing popularity of the Kukas, the British Government imposed many restrictions upon Baba Ram Singh and his followers. The Baba was detained in his village Bhaini. The restrictions raised the morale of the Kukas and they became the sworn enemies of the British. The British Government removed all restrictions in 1867.

After the removal of all restrictions, the Kukas intensified the activities. They murdered some butchers of Amritsar and Raikot in 1871. In the Amritsar case, four Kukas were executed and two were sentenced to transportation for life. In the Raikot case, four Kukas were executed. A few months later, the Kukas raided Maloud and Malerkotla with a view to obtain weapons. Seventy-five Kukas were blown off from the mouths of cannon, one was hacked to pieces and two were transported for life. Bhaini, the headquarters of Kukas, was kept under police surveillance. Most of the Kukas were exiled. Baba Ram Singh was exiled to Burma where he died in 1885. The Baba sent emissaries to seek

10. *Papers relating to the Kuka Sect*, Suptd. Govt. Printing, Calcutta, 1872.

11. Ghulam Bheekh, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

12. Shiv Lal, 'Kuka Movement' in *The Tribune*, 11th May, 1957.

assistance from the rulers of Kashmir and Nepal against the British. Due to the weakness of these rulers, his attempts proved abortive. After 1872, Kuka Suba went to Central Asia several times and tried to persuade Russia to attack India and turn out the British. During the eighties of the last century, Maharaja Dalip Singh visited Moscow. This fact and the prevalence of certain prophecies among the Kukas raised the hopes of the Kukas. Budh Singh, younger brother of Baba Ram Singh, was primarily responsible for the renewed activity of the Kukas. Dr Fauja Singh writes, "Due to the factors such as liberal employment of Sikhs in the army, support of the Sikh literate elite and landed aristocracy to the British and the vigilance of the Government, the movement once again failed to make any appreciable mark."<sup>13</sup>

In an article, Dr Rajindra Prasad, the late President of India, maintained, "Guru Ram Singh considered political freedom a part of religion. The organisation of the Namdharis became very strong. The principles of boycott and non-co-operation, which Mahatma Gandhi introduced so vigorously in our freedom movement were expounded by Guru Ram Singh for the Namdharis."<sup>14</sup> The Guru not only aimed at the moral uplift of his followers, but also laid stress on the attainment of political freedom.

After the Kuka movement, the Singh Sabha movement was launched by the liberal sections of the Sikh community with a view to effect reforms in the Sikh beliefs and practices. The new educational system was introduced to effect social and religious reforms. This movement enjoyed the patronage of the British Government. The leaders of the movement, who belonged to the upper classes of the English educated intelligentsia, did not like to join any national activity. This movement made the Sikhs a self-conscious community ready to sacrifice for the righteous course.

The socio-religious reform movements of the last quarter of the nineteenth century paved the way for militant national activity. As a result of cultural revolution, a powerful educated middle class emerged in the Punjab who were greatly influenced by the Russian defeat at the hands of Japan and the partition of Bengal. They were also affected by the vast quantity of patriotic literature produced during the period.

After alienating the money-lenders and traders by the Land, Alienation

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13. Fauja Singh, *Eminent Freedom Fighters of the Punjab*, Patiala, 1972, p. 11.

14. *Satyug Weekly*, Basant Ank, 1953.

Act, 1901, the Punjab Government increased the irrigation rates in the Bari Doab Canal Colonies in order to secure the so-called legitimate share of increase in the produce of cotton and sugarcane due to improved irrigational facilities. By the end of 1906, the Punjab Government resolved to curtail the rights of the cultivators in order to reduce them to the position of tenants. This resulted in a popular agrarian unrest. In early 1907, public meetings were held at Lahore, Rawalpindi, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Lyallpur to express public resentment to the official Bill which was introduced by the Government to effect changes. Sardar Ajit Singh and Lala Lajpat Rai advocated the cause of the peasants. Sardar Ajit Singh, a fiery orator, called upon three hundred million Indians to turn out hundred and fifty thousand Englishmen from India. Banke Dyal's song 'Pagri Sambhal Jatta' inculcated self-respect in the Punjab peasant. Due to the persecution, and closure of the news paper 'The Punjabee' and the threatened increase of revenue of twenty-five per cent, the movement gained momentum. At Rawalpindi, Ajit Singh urged the cultivators not to pay the increased tax and cultivate land. Lala Hans Raj the president of the meeting thinking that Ajit Singh by his provocative speech was inciting violence tried to stop him. Feeling insulted, Ajit Singh left the meeting at once. Three lawyers, the President, Gurdas Ram and Amolak Ram were prosecuted for propagating sedition and were imprisoned. On the 2nd May, a complete *hartal* was observed and people gathered in the compound of the district courts of Rawalpindi. The Magistrate refused to stop the proceedings. The crowd indulged in violences, broke the furniture of the court and burnt the houses of the European officers. The repressive policy of the government caused resentment in the province. A very important party "Anjuman-i-Mahaban-i-Watan" popularly known as Bharat Mata Society was formed with Ajit Singh, Sufi Amba Prasad and Lal Chand Falak as its important members. They inculcated the spirit of nationalism through press and platform.

As there was the close liaison between the peasant and the soldier, the peasant disaffection spread into the army. The celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the revolt of 1857 and the sympathies of the Sikh infantry with the discontented made the Government apprehensive of a popular revolt. Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were deported. Due to the repression of the Government and the vote of the Colonisation Bill by the Governor-General, the movement abated. The Tilak Press Hoshiarpur was raided by Police and secret literature was captured by the Government.

In order to earn their livelihood, the Punjab peasants migrated to far and near countries of Asia and America, where they settled as cultivators and labourers. A large number of the settlers were Sikhs. After few years of this settlement, the Canadian and American authorities became apprehensive of the adverse economic and social effect of these foreigners on their own countries, the Punjabis had to suffer great hardships at the hands of the natives. The discriminatory attitude of the local Government and refusal of the Indian Government to help them, forced them to organise themselves. Ajit Singh along with others was instrumental in the formation of the Ghadar Party to liberate their motherland from foreign rule.

In 1913, the Ghadar Party came into existence at Astoria (Oregon) under the banner of the Hindustani Workers of the Pacific Coast with Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna as its President and Bhai Kesar Singh as Vice President. Lala Hardayal, Lala Thakur Dass of Dhuri and Pandit Kashi Ram were elected as General Secretary, Under Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Kartar Singh Sarabha and Baba Kartar Singh Latala also attended the meeting and offered themselves as volunteers to work for the emancipation of their motherland. In the executive committee, there were Santokh Singh, Kartar Singh Cheema, Basakha Singh, Munshi Ram and Harnam Singh who incited the Indians to rebellion and throw off the foreign yoke. The headquarters of the party were shifted to San Francisco where a journal *Ghadar* was brought out in Urdu, Punjabi and Gujrati. The headquarters of the Ghadar Party published important pamphlets like *Ghadar di Goonj*, *Ilan-i-Jang*, *Naya Zamana* and the *Balance Sheet of the British Rule in India*. The first issue of the *Ghadar*, dated November 1913, stated in following unequivocal terms its aims and objects.<sup>15</sup>

“Today there begins in foreign lands, but in our country language a war against the British Raj. What is our name? Ghadar, What is our work? Ghadar, Where will Ghadar break out? In India.”

Kartar Singh Sarabha and Raghubar Dayal worked as his assistants. Sarabha used to translate the Ghadar newspaper into Punjabi. Harnam Singh Tundilat of village Kotla Nodh Singh, Kartar Singh Letala and Hari Singh Usman were in the editorial board of the newspaper besides others. When Hardayal went to Germany, his place as editor was assumed by Bhagwan Singh.

15. Khushwant Singh, “India First Armed Revolution—The Ghadar Rebellion of 1915,” *Proceedings Asian History Congress, 1961-62*, New Delhi, p. 17.

Lala Hardayal edited *The Ghadar* whose main aim was to incite the Indians to rebellion. As the President of the Ghadhr Party, Sohan Singh looked after the entire work of the party. "Presidentship," writes Sohan Singh Josh, "Placed enormous responsibilities on Sohan Singh. He devoted his entire time and attention towards organising the party. He would sometimes go to Indian settlements on foot, explain to them the programmes of the Ghadar Party, enrol new members and raise funds for the party papers. While going out he would always keep two or three party members with him. As a result of the work of the party and the paper, Indians were so much enthusiastic that they would not only give the contributions demanded but even considered themselves be entirely at the disposal of the party."<sup>16</sup> Preparations for going to India and organising revolt there to throw off the British yoke were made after 12th April, 1914. Sohan Singh took active part in these meetings. In every meeting, the Government of India was condemned for its callousness, indifference and lack of any help. In the speeches of Sohan Singh, special mention was made of the demolition of the mosque of Kanpur, of razing to the ground the wall of Gurdwara Rikab Ganj, government occupation of Khalsa College, Hindu-Muslim Unity, the injustice done to the passengers of the Kamagata Maru and the Indians were urged to return to India and liberate their motherland.

In 1914 occurred the famous tragedy of the Kamagata Maru. In order to check the migration of Indians into Canada, the authorities of that country banned the entry of all the emigrants who did not possess £200 and who did not journey continuously to Canada. There was no direct ship service from India to Canada in those days. The new ordinances practically stopped the movement of Indian emigrants to Canada. Baba Gurdit Singh, who belonged to village Sarhali in District Amritsar, was at that time a respectable and enterprising contractor at Singapore. The Kamagata Maru (ship) was hired at a large amount from a Japanese firm so that both the conditions of the Canadian Government taking of direct ship and purchasing direct tickets could be fulfilled. Baba Gurdit Singh sailed to Canada with 376 persons. All the passengers belonged to Punjab with the exception of few. The ship which left Hongkong on the 4th April, 1914 for Canada reached Vancouver on 22nd May. The ship was not allowed to the shore and the

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16. Sohan Singh Josh, *Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna*, People's Publishing House, Bombay, p. 36.



passengers were not allowed to land except the domiciles of Canada. The Canadian authorities at Vancouver threatened the Baba to impound his ship in case of non-payment of the charters fee. He could not pay till he fulfilled his contract with the passengers. A case was fought for bringing the ship to the shore and allowing the passengers to land. The case was decided against the Indian passengers. Chief Justice M.C. Donald wrote in his Judgement, "Canada has the inalienable right to place restriction on the entry of citizens of other countries."<sup>17</sup>

On 23rd July, 1914, the Kamagata Maru was forced to return to India. The Ghadar Party in Canada had played a dominant role in providing every facility to the passengers and struggle hard to get them landed on the shore. The Ghadar Party in America helped them with money. Special numbers of the newspaper *Ghadar* were published on the occasion and the Ghadriles contributed to pay the full passage of the ship. The passengers in the ship were regularly supplied with the copies of *the Ghadar*, *Ghadar di Gunj* and *Ghadar Sandesh*.

In accordance with the instructions from the Ghadar Party, Sohan Singh contacted the passengers of the Kamagata Maru at Yokohama and explained to them all the aspects of the party's programme in order to break out the revolt in India.

The passengers of the Kamagata Maru (ship) were not allowed to land either at Hongkong or at Singapore. After a long journey, the ship finally reached the Budge Budge Harbour at Calcutta on the 26th September, 1914. Due to the out break of the First World War, their entry into India was banned by an ordinance. Special arrangements were made to convey the passengers from Calcutta to Punjab. As a result of the conflict with the police 20 Sikhs were killed and 22 were wounded. Gurdit Singh with his twenty-eight companions effected his escape.

The treatment meted out to the Kamagata Maru passengers at Vancouver and Budge Budge Ghat gave a fillip to the Ghadar Movement abroad. Sir Micheal O'Dwyer writes, "It gave a powerful stimulus to the propaganda already at work among them."<sup>18</sup> Regarding the effect of this tragedy on the Ghadar movement, the Indian Sedition Committee maintains, "It inspired some Sikhs of the Punjab with the idea that the Government was biased against them. It strengthened the hands of the Ghadar revolutionaries who were urging Sikhs abroad to return to India

17. C. Knadali, *Indian Overseas*, New Delhi, p. 246.

18. O'Dwyer, Sir Michael, *India as I know It, 1885-1925*, London, 1906, p. 194.

and join the mutiny, which they asserted, was about to begin. Numbers of emigrants listened to such calls and hastened back to India from Canada, the United States, the Philipines, Hong Kong and China."<sup>19</sup>

Ater the Kamagata Maru tregedy the Ghadarites gave call to the Punjabis settled in the U.S.A., Canada and South-East Asia to move quickly to India to emancipate their motherland from foreign yoke. The first group of the Ghadrtes left San Francisco for India in August 1914 by the ship 'Korea.' Addressing them, Ram Chandra said, "Your duty is clear. Go to India, stir up rebellion in every corner of the country. Rob the wealthy and show mercy to the poor. In this way gain universal sympathy. Armes will be provided for you on arrival in India. Failing this you must ransack police stations for rifles. Obey without hesitation the command of leaders."<sup>20</sup>

On arriving at Calcutta, the Government came to know of their plans and arrested all the leaders including Jawala Singh. Of all the ships which brought Ghadrtes to India, Tosa Maru is the most important. There were about three hundred persons aboard it. Sohan Singh Bhakna boarded the ship Namnsang which reached Calcutta from Penang. Sohan Singh was arrested, brought to Calcutta Jail and subsequently to jail at Ludhiana. Sohan Singh was transferred to Multan Jail.

Kartar Singh Sarabha, a Ghadrte, went fearlessly to army units and propagated his revolutionary views to the soldiers without caring for the risk. His daring would have a powerful impact and wherever he went, his words were heeded. Due to the great vigilance of the Government, the activities of the Ghadrtes proved abortive. But they opened factories at Amritsar and Lahore to manufacture bombs.

The main aim of the Ghadrtes was to incite the troops to rebellion. They established cells in almost all the cantonments of the Punjab in a very short time. But the Government was intimated about the plans of the Ghadrtes through their agents. Acting promptly, the Government arrested the Ghadrtes, sentenced eighteen of them to death, out of whom twelve were hanged. The Ghadrtes could not succeed due to the repressive measures of the Government. The defence of India act vested special powers in the Government. There were the summary trials of the accused in the Lahore Conspiracy Cases. Out of them 46 were sentenced to death, 194 were transported for life, 93 were sentenced to

19. The Indian Sediton Committee 1918, Report, p. 148.

20. F.C. Isemonger and Slattery, An Account of the Ghadar Conspiracy, Testimony of the approver Nawab Khan.

varying terms and only 42 were released.

On the 16th November, 1915 seven brave Ghadriles were executed, Kartar Singh Sarabha (Ludhiana), Bhai Bakhshish Singh Gilwali (Amritsar), Bhai Surain Singh son of Ishar Singh Gilwali (Amritsar), Harnam Singh Bhatti, Goraya (Sialkot) and Shri Vishnu Ganesh Pingle (Poona) were executed. They embraced death smilingly. The Ghadriles who were imprisoned, were tortured in jails. "There hardly was a patriot," writes Sohan Singh Josh, "Who was not given punishments like fetters, bar-fetters, hand cuffs, "kohlu" and solitary confinement in a cage. Sohan Singh had to undergo all these punishments in turn. Due to these tortures, two of the patriots, young Bhai Bhan Singh Sunet and Bhai Rulia Singh Sarabha fell martyrs in the jail."<sup>21</sup>

Though the large number of the Ghadriles were the Sikhs, yet they did nothing for the revival of Sikhism. "The eruption of the Ghadar movement," writes Khushwant Singh, "brought about a radical change in the political outlook of the Sikh community. It marked the beginning of the end of three quarters of a century of unquestioned loyalty to the British Raj. Though the rebellion was suppressed and submerged in the enthusiasm generated by the war, it continued to ferment and erupted a few years later during the Akali agitation. The Babbar were largely recruited from the ranks of the Ghadar party."<sup>22</sup>

About four lakh Punjabis fought as soldiers during the First World War. After the War, the Punjabis demanded their legitimate rights, but the Government gave them high sounding tributes and few glittering medals. The prices rose enormously during the War and fall in prices after the War was expected. As a result there were strikes and blackouts. The outbreak of plague, influenza and famine increased the misery of the people. Moreover, the policy of Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab of setting the aristocracy against the middle classes estranged the latter.

About this time the Rikab Ganj Morcha in New Delhi was launched by the Sikhs against the Government of India. The outer wall of Rikab Ganj Gurdwara had been demolished by the Government as early as 1912 and some land belonging to the Gurdwara had been usurped by the Government to build a new capital. This greatly enraged the Sikhs but as the Great War broke out they remained quiet for some time. In 1918, they again started agitation over the demolished wall. The Government

21. Sohan Singh Josh, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

22. Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1977, p. 190.

tried to placate the Sikhs. The demolished wall of the Rikab Ganj was rebuilt, and the acquired land was handed over to the Sikhs. They were exempted from the operation of the arms act and were allowed to wear *kirpans*. The Sikh prisoners were permitted to upkeep their religious emblems and to wear turbans.

The Defence of India Act was only for the duration of the War and it was to end when the War would come to an end. But the situation being explosive and the Government was not ready to part with the special powers vested in it by the Act. It passed the Rowlatt Bills on the recommendation of the Rowlatt Commission. It vested in the Government special powers to deal with sedition.

Against the Rowlatt Bills, Mahatama Gandhi called upon the people to observe *hartal* on 6th April. It raised great enthusiasm in Punjab. At Amritsar, Dr Satyapal and Dr Kitchlew who were guiding the movement were arrested and sent to Dharamsala Jail. A large number of people who marched from Hall Gate to the office of the Deputy Commissioner, were fired at and ten of them were killed. At Lahore a black flag procession was fixed at.

To improve the fast deteriorating situation at Amritsar, the town of Amritsar was handed over to General Dyer on 12th April, 1919 for administration. According to the Hunter's Committee Report, the proclamation to this effect was not properly communicated to the public. On the 13th April, 1919, a public meeting was organised at Jallianwala Bagh, which was enclosed by high house walls on all sides except a small outlet. Without any warning, the General blocked the only exit and ordered the troops to fire at the people. According to the Government, 379 were killed and over 1,200 wounded.<sup>23</sup> At the meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council held on 12th September, 1919, Pandit Madan Mohan Malivya said that the figure of 1,000 killed was nearer the truth than the official assertion.<sup>24</sup> According to Pandit, there were 42 boys among the dead, the youngest of them was only seven months old.<sup>25</sup>

It was a massacre of a most non-violent assembly. In order to strike terror among the people, the General resorted to flogging and other third degree methods of punishment. "The effect that Jallianwala and martial

23. Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India, Calcutta, p. 56.

24. Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council, April 1919 to March 1920.

25. Pearay Mohan, *An Imaginary Rebellion And How It was Suppressed...*, Lahore, 1920, Vol. LXVII, p. 143.

law administration," writes Khushwant Singh, "had on the people of the Punjab can hardly be exaggerated. Racial tension reminiscent of the most savage days of the mutiny when every white man looked upon the coloured as his enemy, was re-created. Even people of tried loyalty, including those who had served in the forces, were victimised. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who claimed that he had saved the empire had in fact dealt it the most grievous blow by alienating almost all Indians including its staunchest supporters."<sup>26</sup>

Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy had far-reaching effects. "Jallianwala Bagh," writes Dr V.N. Datta, "proved a great asset to the nationalist cause. It gave impetus to the struggle for Indian freedom because people could no longer afford to be complacent. The news of Jallianwala Bagh travelled the length and breadth of India and for many it was a rude awakening. From this time onwards political activity increases rapidly and thousands of hitherto uncommitted Indians were drawn into the arena of political activities. The freedom movement had at last acquired a national character."<sup>27</sup>

General Dyer tried his utmost to win over the Sikhs. He summoned the manager of the Golden Temple and Sunder Singh Majithia and urged them to use their influence with the Sikhs in order to win over their favour. He sent out mobile columns through the Sikh villages to save them from the influence of agitators and to prove that the Government was still strong. Priests of the Golden Temple invited the General to the shrine and presented him with a *siropa*, i.e., turban (*patka*) and *kirpan*.

Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, whose orders General Dyer complied with was murdered by a Sikh Udham Singh at a public meeting in London on March 13, 1940. Udham Singh was tried and hanged on the 13th June, 1940.

Mahatma Gandhi later visited Jallianwala Bagh and the sites of the atrocities of the police. Under his inspiring leadership, a new organisation, the Central Sikh League, composed of nationalists and opposed to the Chief Khalsa Diwan's loyalty to the British Government, came into being. The year 1920 was marked by a great change in the temper and tempo of the national movement. The new objective of the movement was *swaraj* the new leader was Mahatma Gandhi and new methods were

26. Khushwant Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

27. V.N. Datta, *Jallianwala Bagh*, p. 173.

both non-violent and revolutionary. Thus, in the words of Phillips, the "nationalist middle class agitation was transformed into mass revolutionary movement."<sup>28</sup>

On the 1st August, 1920, Mahatma Gandhi launched the non-cooperation movement and appealed to the people to surrender titles, honorary posts and observe *hartal* due to the attitude of the Government towards *khilafat* and Amritsar massacre. At a special session of the Indian National Congress under the presidentship of Lala Lajpat Rai on 4th September, 1920, an appeal was made to public servants to dissociate themselves from the administrative and educational institutions and to boycott councils and foreign textiles. At its annual session at Kanpur in 1920, the decision of non-co-operation was ratified with the declaration, "Swaraj by all peaceful and legitimate means." The new policy of the Congress and the crop failure gave an impetus to the movement. The Akali movement brought the Sikhs into the fold of the freedom movement, Boycott of councils, courts, schools and foreign cloth and above all boycott of the Prince of Wales' visit to India in December 1921 and the Hindu-Muslim unity upset the Government, and official machinery resorted to repression. By the end of 1921, the activities of the Akalis in the Punjab, the Mopleh revolt on the Malabar Coast, the peasant movement in U.P., the strike of the working class and the non-cooperation movement of the Congress imperilled the very existence of the British Empire. The movement was withdrawn by Mahatma Gandhi in February 1922 in order to avoid further violence as 22 policemen were burnt alive in a police station.

On the 15th November, 1920, a committee of 175 representatives known as the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee was formed for the management of all Sikh shrines. Sunder Singh Majithia, Harbans Singh of Attari and Bhai Jodh Singh were elected President, Vice-President and Secretary respectively. On the 14th December, 1920, the Shiromani Akali Dal was formed with a view to work for the reforms in the Gurdwaras and take over the Gurdwaras from the recalcitrant *Mahants*. A paper in Gurmukhi, the *Akali* was started with Mangal Singh and Hira Singh Dard as its editors. Mangal Singh Gill, of village Gill, in Ludhiana district, was sentenced to five years imprisonment for anti-Government writing in *the Akali*. Hira Singh Dard was imprisoned several times.

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28. C.H. Phillips, *Evolution of India and Pakistan, 1858-1947...*, OUP, 1962, p. 201.

Since its inception, the various agitations launched by the Akali Dal have always been peaceful. The Akalis laid emphasis of non-violence and suffered a lot whether a agitation was religious or political. Acting on the precedents of the Great Gurus, the Akalis made their sacrifices and did not butcher others. Although the agitations of the Akalis were for the liberation of the Gurdwaras, they came into collision with the Government and ultimately contributed to the freedom movement of the country.

The Gurdwara reform movement started by the Akalis had its genesis, in the discontent among the Sikhs against the 'Corruption of the Mahants,' the hereditary priests of the Sikh shrines. Its main aim was to reform the management of the Gurdwaras and to bring them under the control of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee. The Akali movement during the period 1920-25 was a mass upsurge for the liberation of the Gurdwaras.

The Akalis who launched the agitation for the liberation of the Gurdwaras remained non-violent despite the atrocities committed by the *Mahants*, their hirelings and the Government. Nankana Sahib, the birth place of Guru Nanak, was managed by an Udasi, Mahant Narain Das, the richest of the *Mahants*. He kept a mistress at the Gurdwara and invited prostitutes to dance in the sacred premises. The local Sikhs protested against the profligacy of the *Mahant* and were eager to turn him out. The *Mahant* asked the police for protection and hired four hundred *thugs* to safeguard his interests.

On the 20th February, 1921, a *jatha* of Akalis led by Lachhman Singh Dharowala entered the Gurdwara. The gates of the Gurdwara were closed and Narain Das's *thugs* attacked the non-violent Akalis with swords, hatchets and firearms and killed them in cold blood. The dead and dying Akalis were dragged to a pile of wood collected earlier and set on fire. By the time, the police and the local Sikhs reached the spot, 130 Akalis had been burnt. For the murder of 130 Akalis, three were sentenced to death and two including the *Mahant* were imprisoned for life. Bands of the Akalis began to converge on Nankana Sahib and it was openly alleged that the Commissioner of Lahore had supported the *Mahant* secretly with whose permission he purchased arms. The Commissioner of Lahore hurried to Nankana Sahib and handed over the keys of the Gurdwaras to the representatives of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee. It is to the credit of Akalis that despite great atrocities they remained peaceful and conducted the *morcha* peacefully.

Mahatma Gandhi remarked about this, "Every thing points to a second edition of Dyerism, more barbarous and more fiendish than the barbarism at Jallianwalla Bagh."<sup>29</sup>

Repression and economic distress gave an impetus to the Akali Movement. Radical leaders who came to the forefront were of different shades of political opinion and religious enthusiasm, Baba Kharak Singh, Mehtab Singh and Teja Singh Samunderi were inspired by religious considerations. Master Tara Singh and three brothers—Amar Singh, Surmukh Singh and Jaswant Singh of Jhabal were religious and nationalistic.

Being suspicious of the bonafides of Baba Kharak Singh, the new president of the S.G.P.C., the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar took away the keys of the Golden Temple Amritsar on the 7th November, 1921 and intended to hand them over to a person nominated by him. The S.G.P.C. did not allow the nominees of the Deputy Commissioner to enter the Gurdwara. On November 21, the police arrested 193 prominent Akali leaders including Baba Kharak Singh, Mehtab Singh and Master Tara Singh. They were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Over 1,200 Akalis were arrested in 13 districts of the province. The Government interceded by January 1922, all the Akali leaders were set free and the keys of the Golden Temple were given to Baba Kharak Singh. Mahatma Gandhi congratulated the Baba telegraphically, "First decisive battle of India's freedom won. Congratulations."<sup>30</sup>

Sunder Dass, the *Mahant* of the Guru ka Bagh, a small shrine near Amritsar, handed over the Gurdwara to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and was baptised as Sikh. But when he saw the favourable attitude of the Government towards the Mahants, he asserted that though he had handed over the Gurdwara to the S.G.P.C. yet he regarded the Guru ka Bagh as his personal property. He objected to the Sikhs cutting of timber for the *langar* in the Gurdwara. On the 9th August, 1922, five Sikhs were arrested on the charge of trespass and sentenced to six month's rigorous imprisonment. The Government arrested the S.G.P.C. leaders including Mehtab Singh and Master Tara Singh. The police blocked all the approaches to the Guru ka Bagh Gurdwara and severely beat those with iron knobbed *lathis* who proceeded to the shrine till they fell unconscious on the ground.

29. *The Times*, March 11, 1921.

30. Fauja Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 37.



The Akali *jathas* of 100 volunteers daily proceeded to Guru ka Bagh and remained non-violent in word and deed. They were severely beaten by the police and thrown into ditches where non-government relief parties picked them up. For nineteen days, the Akali *jathas* were sent and treated in the like manner. The distinguished leaders like Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Dr Rajinder Parsad and C.F. Andrews observed the non-violent Akalis being beaten by the police. C.F. Andrews was greatly moved and he wrote, "A new heroism, learnt through suffering has arisen in the land. A new lesson in moral warfare has been taught to the world."<sup>31</sup> The Lt. Governor of Punjab who visited Guru ka Bagh ordered the police to stop beating the *satyagrahi* Akalis. By that time, 5,605 Akalis had been arrested and 936 were hospitalised. Due to the intercession of the Lt. Governor, Sir Ganga Ram, retired engineer and philanthropist, purchased the land and handed it over to the Akalis.

Maharaja Ripduman Singh of Nabha had sympathy with the Akalis and the British Government was eager to dethrone him. On the complaint of the Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala, the boundary dispute between Patiala and Nabha States was referred to British Court of Inquiry. The court gave the verdict against the Maharaja of Nabha. The political agent forced Ripduman Singh to abdicate. This greatly hurt the feeling of the Sikhs. The S.G.P.C. passed a resolution demanding the restoration of the Maharaja and asked the Sikhs to observe 9th September, 1923 as Nabha Day. The Sikhs of Nabha State organised *akhand path* on the occasion. One such *akhand path* was at Gurdwara Gangsar in village Jaito. The police of Punjab and Nabha State entered the shrine, interrupted the recitation of the holy *Granth* and arrested some Akalis. This greatly hurt the Sikhs sentiments and a new *marcha* was launched. The Government declared S.G.P.C. and Shiromani Akali Dal as unlawful bodies. Prominent Akali leaders including Mehtab Singh, Teja Singh Samundri, Teja Singh Akarpuri, Bawa Harikishan Singh, Gyani Sher Singh, Prof. Teja Singh, Prof. Narinjan Singh, Sarmukh Singh Jhabal, Sohan Singh Josh, Gopal Singh Qaumi and Sewa Singh Thikriwala were arrested on the charge of waging war against the King and brought to Lahore Fort for trial. The *jathas* continued to march to Jaito. They were severely beaten and many of them imprisoned. On February 21, 1923, a *jatha* of 500 was fired upon but the members of the *jatha* continued marching resulting in considerable loss of life.

31. Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, Delhi.

The Indian National Congress declared its full support to the Akali *morcha* at Jaito. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Santhanam and A. T. Gidwani, who were members of the all India Congress Committee, proceeded to Jaito from Delhi to ascertain the exact position. They were arrested on the orders of J. Wilson Johanston, I.C.S., the Administrator of Nabha on September 21, 1923. They were produced in the court in the Nabha State on October 3, 1923 for trial. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in his statement commented on the arbitrary manner in which the case against him in the court was conducted, "Thus on the admission of the court it is the administrator who decides on some of our applications presented to this court and the court merely transmits his orders to us. The gentleman who initiated the proceedings against us thus becomes our judge. It is because of our conviction that it is not possible to obtain justice in matters to which the Government is a party, that we refrain from offering a defence doing."<sup>32</sup> He further maintained, I do not know what the State of Nabha was during the previous administration. But the present administration has certainly shown in our case a remarkable disregard of all rules of law and procedure. It seems to me very strange that any straight forward administration should seek to keep out all outsiders and be afraid of our exposure. Something must be radically wrong for an administration to have recourse to the preventive sections of the code in order to shift all legitimate inquiry."<sup>33</sup> They were sentenced to two years and six months imprisonment. But they were released. The Government ultimately surrendered in October 1924 and allowed a *jatha* of Sikh Sudhar Sabha to enter the Gurdwara at Jaito in order to hold the *akhand path*.

The result of the peaceful Akali *morchas* was that the Government passed the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act in 1925.

Throughout the Sikhs' struggle for Gurdwara Reform, the Akalis remained non-violent despite the atrocities perpetrated on them by the Government and the *Mahants*, about thirty thousand Akalies were imprisoned, four hundred were killed and two thousand were wounded, fifteen lakhs of rupees were paid as fine and forfeitures. The restrictions were imposed on the employment of the Sikhs in the military and civil departments.<sup>34</sup>

32. File 14 C, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, statement of Pandit Jawaharlal, Nehru.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Panjab Legislative Council Debates*, May 7, 1925, Lahore, p. 1105.

Despite these vicissitudes, the Akalis were non-violent. The Babbars also played a significant role against the Raj. Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni writes, "the Akalis, went through sufferings and made sacrifices that could only have been demanded of seasoned soldiers. In their case it was not a blind obedience like that of the Balaclava horsemen. Not desperate submission to an order because it must be obeyed, but the indomitable, unconquerable faith that they were doing the right thing in the service of their God and the community. The stories of the crusaders pale into insignificance before the Guru-ka-Bagh or Jaito episodes, for instance because if for no other reason, the Akalis practised non-violence such as Christ himself preached in the sermon of the mount."<sup>35</sup>

Due to the efforts of Bhai Santokh Singh and Abdul Majid, the Kirti Kisan Party was formed in 1927. The publication of a newspaper, *The Kirti* was started. In the beginning, the party worked for the reduction of rents, abolition of *nazranas*, etc. Due to its association with the revolutionary Nau Jawan Sabha the Government became apprehensive of its designs and with the assistance of the Unionist Party, the activities of the Party were curbed. As a result, the members of the party changed their loyalty and joined the Communist Party.

In March 1926, Bhagat Singh formed the Nau Jawan Sabha with a view to inspire the Punjabi youth for the revolutionary activities. Due to the efforts of Bhagat Singh, Sardul Singh and others, the Nau Jawan Sabha soon became powerful. Eminent national leaders like Jawahar Lal Nehru spoke from its platform.

In 1923 in association with the Kirti Kisan Party, the Nau Jawan Sabha spread its activities. A "Tract Society" was established with the primary object of publishing revolutionary literature. Their literature was mostly distributed among the students at Lahore—a centre of learning at that time. The Sabha also organised a big procession under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai to protest against the all white Simon Commission. While heading the procession, the Lala received fatal blows of police *lathis* and died due to injuries on 17th November, 1928. Greatly enraged, Bhagat Singh and others killed a high police officer Saunders.

After this incident the Punjab revolutionaries went underground and formed Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw bombs in the Central Assembly Hall with

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35. Ruchi Ram Sahni, *Struggle for Reform in Sikh Shrines*, Amritsar, 1964, p. vi.

a view to apprise the British Government about the sentiments of the Indian people. The Lahore conspiracy case was instituted in 1929. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were sentenced to death in October 1930.

Though Mahatma Gandhi always advocated for non-violence and was not in favour of the violent movement of Bhagat Singh and his associates he had all praise for the supreme sacrifice and patriotism of Bhagat Singh. Mahatma Gandhi said, "It is impossible to assess his (Bhagat Singh's) courage. Hanging has placed a crown of bravery on these youngmen. Wherever words of praise have been said in favour of those youngmen, I agree with it. We must appreciate their sacrifice, bravery and unbounded courage though we may not use our courage the way they used it."<sup>36</sup>

Sohan Singh Josh and these companions of Bhagat Singh were involved in Meerut Conspiracy Case. Due to the ruthlessness of the British Government, the revolutionary movement gradually faded out but it left its great impact.

In the meantime, the First Round Table Conference was convened to discuss the recommendations of the Simon Commission. In this Conference the Sikh delegates expressed their consent to joint, electorates with the reservation of seats for minorities but they were against communal majorities based on separated electorates. The Sikhs were given the right to have separate electorate.

In the Second Round Table Conference the representatives of the Sikhs, Ujjal Singh and Sampuran Singh demanded for the Sikhs 30 per cent. representation in the Punjab and 5 per cent. at the centre and at least one Sikh member in the Central Cabinet. The consences could not be reached in the conference due to the disagreement among the delegates on April 16, 1932 Ramsay Mac Donald announced his award on communal representation. According to it, the Sikhs like Muslims were given separate weightage. 33 out of 175 in the Punjab Assembly, 3 out of 50 in the North West Frontier Province, 6 out of 350 in the Federal Legislative Assembly and 4 out of 150 in the Council were Sikhs.

Sampuran Singh and Ujjal Singh strongly criticised the award and withdrew from the conference.

The Third Round Table Conference was convened to consider the reports of the committees. Out of 46 Indians, Tara Singh of Ferozepur represented the Sikhs. He protested against provincial autonomy under

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36. *The Dally Preet*, Jullundur, Bhagat Singh Number dated the 23rd March, 1949.

a dominant Muslim majority. He suggested safeguards which would provide that measures affecting minorities should not be passed without the consent of three-fifths of the community and it should be subject to the veto of the Governor.

Communal relations worsened during the thirties and riots were widespread. At Lahore over the site of the Gurdwara Sahidganj, there were serious communal riots.

The Government of India Act was passed by the British Parliament in 1935. According to this Act, there was an All India Federation having a Federal Court and Federal Public Service Commission. In place of dyarchy in the provinces, the provincial autonomy was introduced. At the centre, dyarchy was introduced. The federal scheme was opposed by all political parties. The provincial scheme was deemed better and the various parties agreed to participate in elections in 1937. In the Punjab, the Sikhs split into two parties, the Akalis and the anti-Akali party known as the Khalsa Nationalist Party. Out of the total of 175 seats, the Khalsa Nationalist Party had 15-20 seats and some members constantly changed their loyalty. In the ministry of Sikander Hayat Khan one Sikh, Sunder Singh Majithia was also included.

Inspired by the political movements in British India, the backward people of the Princely States launched struggle to abolish feudalism and to obtain democratic right with the help of the Congress they formed political party known as Praja Mandal.

Due to the growth of nationalism in British India the Britishers began to rely more upon the support of Indian rulers. The political unrest of the early twenties in the Punjab drew the people of the Princely States and the British empire closer to one another. The Akali Dal also began to take interest in affairs of the Princely States of the Punjab. The arrest of some prominent and popular leaders by the Patiala State greatly hurt the feelings of the people who convened a meeting at Mansa on 7th July, 1928. The foundation of the Punjab Riyasti Praja Mandal was laid in the conference.

On 10th August, 1929, the Punjab Riyasti Praja Mandal decided to extend its activities to other neighbouring States such as Pataudi, Nahan, Mandi, Saket, Chamba, Bhawalpur and Kashmir. The Praja Mandal advocated for the curtailment of royal-purses and privileges, popular legislatures, independent judiciary and obtaining other rights for the people.

With the help of Congress, the Praja Mandal Movement gained

momentum. The Princes tried to suppress the movement. Midnight raids were conducted on villages. The properties of the participants were confiscated and they were imprisoned. Sewa Singh Thikriwala, President of the Punjab Riyasti Praja Mandal, was arrested and sentenced to eight years imprisonment and rupees five thousand as fine. He went on hunger strike in jail and died on 20th January, 1935.

When Mahatma Gandhi launched the Quit India Movement in 1942, the Praja Mandal supported it. According to the Act of 1935, the Princes had the option to join federation or not. The people of the States were ready to merge with India to end the aristocratic and autocratic rule of the Princes. In 1946, there was the agitation in Faridkot State against its arbitrary ruler. Giani Zail Singh's role in this agitation was conspicuous. When Giani Zail Singh informed Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru about the atrocities perpetrated by the Raja of Faridkot, the Pandit expressed sympathies with the people of the State and resolved to visit Faridkot State. He arrived at Faridkot on the 27th May, 1946, hoisted the tri-colour flag and in his speech maintained, "The British are going most definitely. If Indian States who depend for their existence on the British do not move with them then they cannot exist."<sup>37</sup> These words are prophetic about the future relations of the national government with the Indian States. The seriousness of the situation was realised by the Raja of Faridkot. He entered into negotiations with Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and the result was Nehru Harinder Pact.<sup>38</sup>

In 1939, the Second World War broke out. As Great Britain was engaged in the War, India being her dependency was declared a belligent country. The Congress protested that the people of the country had not been consulted on this ground. The Congress ministries resigned and Mahatma Gandhi started Individual Satyagraha against the war propaganda of the Government.

During the War, the reverses suffered by the British cast gloom over India. The Sikhs became restless. There were rumours of a Khalsa rising against the Unionist ministry. The Sikh leaders denounced the Unionist Ministry as Muslim Raj. In July 1941, Lord Linlithgow nominated the Maharaja of Patiala and Naunihal Singh Mann to the Defence Council and a year later Sir Jogendra Singh was nominated to the Executive Council as member in charge of the education portfolio.

37. *The Tribune*, 28th May, 1946.

38. Records of Fardikot State, File No. 456, Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

In March 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps, a socialist and a friend of Jawahar Lal Nehru was dispatched to India to offer independence as soon as the War ended. The statement of Cripps about the British policy that it was their duty to protect the minorities, greatly offended the Congress. Master Tara Singh, Baldev Singh, Sir Jogendra Singh and Ujjal Singh waited on Cripps as the Sikh representatives. But the Cripps Mission ended in failure.

Due to the frustration in the country and the growing pressure of the Japanese on the British, Mahatma Gandhi launched the Quit India Movement in 1942. The Indian National Congress was declared an illegal institution. The Government lifted the ban on Communist Party. A large number of Punjabi Communists were Sikhs. They began to publish propaganda literature in many languages including Punjabi. Their weekly *Jang-i-Azadi* and pamphlets supported the demand of Muslims for Pakistan.

The Indian National Army commonly known as I.N.A. under the able leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose and Mohan Singh greatly contributed to the freedom struggle. Out of the 20,000 Indian prisoners of war who volunteered to join I.N.A. a large number was that of the Sikhs.

Among the Sikh officers were Colonel Niranjan Singh Gill, Major Mahabir Singh Dhillon and Captain Thakar Singh. In the provisional government established by Subhash Chandra Bose, two army officers Naripendra Singh Bhagat and Lieutenant-Colonel Gulzara Singh and one civilian Dahar Singh Narala of Bangkok, were Sikhs. The newly formed army fought many battles for the country. The I.N.A. was disbanded after the War.

After the War in 1945, the Labour Party won the elections in England. The new Labour Government ordered general elections in India. In these elections the Muslim League fared better. In the Punjab, the Muslim League captured 79 seats out of a total of 175 seats. No single party had so many seats. The Congress, the Sikhs and Unionist Party joined to prevent the Muslim League from coming to power.

A Cabinet Mission consisting of Lord Patric Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A. Alexander was sent to India to effect the political settlement among the various parties of India. Master Tara Singh, Gyani Kartar Singh and Harnam Singh composed the Sikh delegation who were interviewed by the Cabinet Mission. The Sikh delegation opposed the formation of Pakistan. Master Tara Singh asserted that

he was for a united India, but if the demand for Pakistan was conceded he was for a separate Sikh State with the right of joining either with India or Pakistan. But the Cabinet Mission took no notice of Sikh-istan, Azad Punjab or Khalistan and treated the claim as something put up by the Indian National Congress to baffle the Muslim Leagues' demand for Pakistan. The Cabinet Mission's scheme for the unity of India while largely meeting the viewpoint of the League proved abortive. After the failure of the Cabinet Mission, the Labour Government of England decided to establish an Interim Government comprising the representatives of the major political parties. On September 2, 1946, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru's Cabinet was sworn in, Baldev Singh joined as the Defence Minister. After a few months, the Muslim League joined it. But the League resorted to a policy of 'Direct Action.' The first Direct Action Day was fixed on 6th August, 1946. There was great turmoil on that day. The division of the country appeared inevitable.

Lord Mountbatten was particularly sent to India to effect the peaceful partition of India. The Congress was persuaded by the new Viceroy to accept the partition of the country. The Sikhs were opposed to the formation of Pakistan. On the assurance of the Congress, that they would be accorded due treatment in India, they threw their lot with the Congress. On 2nd June, 1947, Plan for the partition of the country was announced after its approval by the Congress and the Sikhs and the Muslim League. At last, the long struggle for independence came to an end after the independence of India on 15th August, 1947.

The Sikhs played a prominent role in India's struggle for freedom. They were second to none in their efforts to throw off the foreign yoke. The daring Sikhs did not hesitate to sacrifice their all for their motherland. In the letter to The Editor of the *Sikh Gazette Forum*, Delhi, July 1-15, 1986, Gilbert Lobo wrote about the grand sacrifices of the Sikhs, "Sikhs have relatively shed more blood for India than any other community. Out of the 2125 martyrs for freedom, 1557 or 75 per cent. were Sikhs. Out of 2646 sent to Andamans for life sentence 2147 or 80 per cent. were Sikhs. Out of 127 Indians who were sent to gallows, 92 or 80 per cent. were Sikhs. In Subhash Bose's army of 20,000, 12,000 were Sikhs, where as Sikhs were just 2 per cent. of the total population.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the non-violence performance of the heroes of different *morchas* of Akali Movement, is unparalleled in the annals of our freedom struggle.

39. Gilbert Lobo's letter to the Editor, *Sikh Gazette Forum*, Delhi, July 1-15, 1986.



## A Year of President Rule in Pepsu (5 March 1953 to 8 March 1954)

GURSHARAN SINGH\*

Patiala and East Punjab States Union as appeared in 1948 was a work of crazy patchwork; the mere binding together of eight small Princely States with non-contiguous territories at many places and with diverse stages of backwardness by itself could not mean much for neo-era of democracy. These States had been an important foothold of British imperialism and a cosy refuge of despotic Princelings. Although they owed their existence to no difference in character between their people or territories and those of the Punjab, yet they lagged far behind Punjab and other provinces in British India, in both constitutional and administrative development.

The 1952 election brought into bold relief the main drawbacks of Pepsu's party-politics in general and the Congress and Akali Dal in particular.

### I

After the General Election of 1952, the party position in the Pepsu Legislative Assembly was as follow :

#### Pepsu Assembly 1952<sup>1</sup>

<i>Name of the Party</i>	<i>Seats in the Assembly</i>
Congress	26
Akali Dal	21
Independents	6
Communist Party of India (CPI)	3
Jan Sangh	2
Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP)	2
Total	60

In the States of Madras, Orissa, Travancor-Cochin—where the Congress could not get an absolute majority in the elections—it succeeded

\*Head, Deptt. of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.

1. G. D. Binani and T.V. Rama Rao, *India At a Glance* (Bombay, 1953).

in forming minority governments. In Pepsu Congress Party tried to form a government but was unsuccessful to do so. Instead, a United Front of all the opposition parties i.e., non-Congress led by the Akali Dal succeeded in forming the Government on 22 April, 1952.

Gian Singh Rarewala (Akali) became the Chief Minister of Pepsu. It was the first and the only non-Congress ministry since independence. Despite the fact that the Akali Dal was factionalised on the issue of a Punjabi speaking state,<sup>2</sup> it projected a united image of itself both in the public and to New Delhi. For a while it postponed its demands for Punjabi Suba in order to give the Centre no cause for intervention. However, since the Communists, though only three in number, controlled the balance of power in the United Front and the Akali Dal increasingly showed signs of compromising with their demands. The Communists on their part, tried to make the best use of this opportunity in building and expanding their sphere of influence in certain areas of the State.<sup>3</sup>

For the period of about ten months during which the United Front ministry governed Pepsu, the Centre kept a close watch over its activities, particularly because the Akali Dal was ideologically committed to the creation of a Punjabi speaking state and the Communists, all over India were inciting people to a violent overthrow of the Congress government.<sup>4</sup> As such, the alliance between the Akali Dal and the

2. *The Times of India*, 28 March, 1953. Gian Singh Rarewala who belonged to Fatehgarh district was maternal uncle of the Rajpramukh. He headed the first Cabinet after the integration of the States and also remained head of the two caretaker governments before the general election. *The Times of India*, 23 Feb., 1953.

3. B.D. Dua, *Presidential Rule in India 1950-1974—A Study in Crisis Politics* (New Delhi, 1979), p. 104.

4. The violent activities of the Communists were most marked in the Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh in these years. As if the communal carnage following partition was not enough, the Communists promptly acquired Telengana (A Telgu-Speaking south-east corner of the princely state of Hyderabad) as their territorial base of operations for guerrilla warfare against New Delhi. Between 1947-50 the Communist Party of India, Patel stated in the Parliament, was responsible for 2500 murders in Hyderabad State alone. Considering that the country was drastically weak the Communists felt that the time was just ripe for "the immediate displacement of government—some of the writings showed fairly clearly an expectation that the country would be fragmented in the process of achieving independence. See Sardar Patel's statement in the Parliament recorded in the *Times of India*, 11 August, 1950 and Gene. D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India* (Berkeley, 1958), p. 81.

Communists in Pepsu was perceived by the Central leaders as a threat to the political integrity of the country. The fact that the Communists had set up their own *panchayats* (local governments) in a number of districts of Pepsu and the law and order situation was far from satisfactory, increased the apprehension of the Centre all the more. The 1950 manifesto of the Communist Party began like this "Does the constitution which is the product of the union between national traitors and imperialist exploiters, guarantee the sovereignty of the nation? No it does not."<sup>5</sup>

The opportunity for a central intervention in Pepsu came when the Election Tribunal set aside the election of nine members of the Legislative Assembly, including that of the Chief Minister in February 1953. Of the remaining 51 members of the Assembly the re-aligned strength of the various parties was: United Front 25; Communists 3; Independents 2 and Congress 21.<sup>6</sup>

Soon after, the strength of the Legislative Assembly was further reduced to 50. Dara Singh was the fifth Minister of the United Front Cabinet to be unseated. Before him four ministers Ch. Attar Singh, Ch. Ram Singh, Mihan Singh Gill and Gian Singh Rarewala were unseated.<sup>7</sup> Dr Katju said in the House of the People, "This state of political uncertainty has been heightened by recent decisions of the Election Tribunal. Election petitions were filed against no less than 31 members in a house of 60. Petitions against 14 have been decided and against 17 are still pending... the law and order position had never been satisfactory... parallel administrative authority had been established."<sup>8</sup> In those days a secret inquiry was going on against the Rajpramukh, on the allegations that he had financed the Akalis by misusing his position and office. The Rajpramukh was put to choice either to face the inquiry or to proceed to a foreign country for two years and in his absence, the Maharaja Faridkot, the Uprajpramukh, was to discharge the function of Rajpramukh. Gian Singh Rarewala was also taken into confidence by the Centre and was asked to resign with the understanding that he was to be appointed as

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5. *The Times of India*, 19 January, 1950.

6. Shiv Raj Nakade, "Article 356 of the Indian Constitution—its Use and Misuse." *Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies*, October-December, 1969, p. 85. See also the *Times of India*, 23 February 1953. Soon after with the defection of Ch. Harnam Singh, a Harijan member of the United Front Party, who had joined the Congress Assembly Party, the strength of the Congress members rose to 22. See *The Hindustan Standard*, 6 March, 1953.

7. *The Tribune*, 6 March, 1953.

8. *Ibid.*

the Adviser during the President's Rule. Maharaja Patiala (Rajpramukh) counselled his uncle Rarewala to resign which he accordingly did on 1 March 1953, but before doing this Akali Dal was never consulted.<sup>9</sup> "When Rarewala was not appointed as the Adviser, his associates burnt the effigy of democracy. Dara Singh and Inder Singh, members of the Rarewala Cabinet said they first learnt of the resignation of Rarewala, tendered to the Rajpramukh in Delhi, through Press Reports on 1 March 1953. "This was a big surprise to the Cabinet for the reason that neither at the meeting of the party on 26 February nor on his return from Delhi did Rarewala give his mind that he had resigned or that he was thinking of resigning."<sup>10</sup> The two former ministers said that at a meeting of the United Front on 4 March, they came to know from Rarewala "in very reserved words" that the Rajpramukh had made a report to the Central Government that no party was in a position to form a stable government in Pepsu and the President's rule was inevitable.<sup>11</sup>

Constitutional propriety and fairness demanded that Rarewala should have explained the entire position to his Cabinet colleagues and acted on their advice. The sequence of events indicated that Rarewala submitted his Cabinet's resignation to facilitate the suspension of the constitution<sup>12</sup> and the dissolution of the Assembly as recommended by the Rajpramukh. But for such improper and unconstitutional move on the part of Rarewala, it would not have been constitutional for the President to dismiss a majority party, forming the only non-Congress Ministry in the country and take over the administration.

Bhupinder Singh Mann stated that Rarewala was left with no other choice since the Rajpramukh had already given in writing to the States Ministry that the law and order situation in Pepsu stood paralysed necessitating the imposition of the President Rule. According to Mann when Dr Ambedkar was informed about the development, the Dr spoke that he felt like burning the "book."<sup>13</sup> Mann was of the opinion that Maharaja was veering around the Congress particularly when the Maharani

9. *The Hindustan Standard*, 26 March, 1953; and interview with Dara Singh, Advocate quoted in Gur Rattan Pal Singh, *The Illustrated History of the Sikhs (1947-78)* (Chandigarh, 1979), p. 32. See also B.D. Dua, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *The Hindustan Times*, 29 March, 1953.

12. *Ibid.*

13. 'The book of Indian Constitution': interview with Bhupinder Singh Mann quoted in Gur Rattan Pal Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

had become politically closer to Nehru and that was the reason that the Maharaja openly supported the Congress in 1954 election.<sup>14</sup> According to Mann, the Maharaja's family took strong exception to the Akalis supporting the merger of Pepsu with Punjab, while the Akalis on the other hand, were eager of merger as it would have expedited the formation of the Punjabi Suba.<sup>15</sup>

On March 4, 1953 the constitution in Pepsu was suspended by the President.

The proclamation said, "whereas I, Rajendra Prasad, President of India have received a report from the Rajpramukh of the State of Patiala and East Punjab States Union, and on considering the report and other information received by me, I am satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of that State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provision of the Constitution of India."<sup>16</sup>

Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 356 of the Constitution of all other powers enabling me in that behalf, I hereby :

"(a) Assume to myself, as President of India, all functions of the Government of the said State and all powers vested in or exercisable by the Rajpramukh of that State.

(b) Declare that the powers of the legislature of the said State shall be exercisable by or under the authority of Parliament and

(c) Make the following incidental and consequential provisions which appear to me to be necessary or desirable for giving effect to the objects of the proclamation."<sup>17</sup>

In pursuance of sub clause (1)17 of the clause (c) of the proclamation issued on this the fourth day of March 1953 by the President :

(d) In the exercise of the functions and powers assumed to himself by virtue of clause (A) of this proclamation, it should be lawful for the President to act to such extent as he thinks fit through the Rajpramukh of the said State.

(e) The operation of the provisions of the constitution in relation to that State is hereby suspended.<sup>18</sup>

"The President is pleased to direct that all the functions of the

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14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. *The Tribune*, 6 March, 1953.

17. For details of the clause (c) see *The Tribune*, 6 March, 1953.

18. *The Hindustan Standard*, 6 March, 1953.

Government of the State of Patiala and East Punjab State Union and all the powers vested or exercisable by the Rajpramukh of the State under the constitution or under any law in force in that State, which have been assumed by the President by virtue of clause (A) of the said proclamation, shall, subject to the superintendence, direction and control of the President, be exercised by the Rajpramukh of the said State, who will act on the advice of the Adviser appointed by the President in this behalf."<sup>19</sup>

The United Front Party of the State Assembly which was meeting to elect a new leader of the party passed the following resolution on getting the information regarding the suspension of Constitution in Pepsu :

"The United Front Party condemns the unwanted high-handed and unconstitutional act of the Government of India in dissolving the Pepsu Legislative Assembly and suspending constitution and setting up a dictatorial Fascist rule of one man in the State. The United Front Party's strength today in the house of 51 is 26, besides the speaker."

"The United Front Party was in a position to carry on the work of the Government and pass the budget in the session scheduled to meet on March 16. The Government of India by taking such action against the only non-Congress ministry in the country, have deprived the people of this State the right to form their own Government. The Central Government has done this for the State Congress which organisation in this State could not achieve itself anything and has thus acted in a partisan manner. There remains no doubt that this action has been taken with deliberate design to suppress and eliminate non-Congress elements and rehabilitate the decaying Congress in the State."<sup>20</sup>

The United Front, immediately after, formed a new political party "Pepsu National United Front." Rarewala was elected its President, Nihal Singh Takshak became its Vice-President and Ram Singh, a former Revenue Minister was nominated as General Secretary.<sup>21</sup>

Dr K. N. Katju, advanced the following reasons in defence of

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19. For the details of Clause (c) see *The Tribune* and *The Hindustan Standard*, 6 March, 1953.
  20. *The Hindustan Standard*, 6 March 1953. The United Front still had a majority since one defector from the Congress Party had joined the United Front. United Front was also willing to provide a different person for the office of Chief Ministership. See B.D. Dua, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
  21. *Ibid.*

imposing presidential rule in the state :

- (a) The party position in the Assembly was extremely fluid. There were frequent floor-crossings—a practice which was “highly immoral.”
- (b) The Election Tribunal had invalidated the elections of several members of the Assembly including the Chief Minister and many more election petitions were pending before the Tribunal. Thus it was better to hold fresh election than to hold several by-elections. In order for the fresh elections to be held in a “fair and impartial” manner, it had become essential for the Centre to take over the administration of the State.
- (c) The law and order machinery had broken down. “In three districts, Communists had formed 70 to 80 *panchayats* in opposition to the established government. These parallel administrations had been collecting rent and revenue, trying cases including murder cases and preventing persons from going to law courts.”<sup>22</sup>
- (d) “There was no stable ministry. Nothing was being done there and the Legislature was not even functioning properly.”<sup>23</sup>

Leading the opposition in the Lok Sabha, Dr S. P. Mukerjee (Jan Sangh) blamed the Centre for arbitrary intervention and reminded the Home Minister that the situation in Madras, Orissa, Rajasthan and Travancore-Cochin was no different from that of Pepsu except that the former states were being administered by Congress minority governments.<sup>24</sup> Sarangadhar Das of Praja Socialist Party of West Cuttack referred to lawlessness in other parts of the country and asked the Home Minister why no necessity had arisen to impose presidential rule in those parts. “For instance,” Das said, “in Madhya Pradesh, Vindhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and in Saurashtra—all kinds of things are happening for months and yet, the Government of India does not announce the President’s rule in those states.”<sup>25</sup>

In the Rajya Sabha, P. Sundaryya of the Communist Party charged the Centre for pressurising the Rajpramukh by directing him to submit a report on the constitutional failure of his government.<sup>26</sup> J. S. Mann

22. *Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol. II, No. 4, 12 March, 1953, p. 1996.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 1895.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 1930-31.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 1935.

26. *Rajya Sabha Debates*, 25 March, 1953, p. 2126.

(Akali) produced statistics in the House to show that the law and order situation during the United Front government was much better than under the previous Congress rule. C.G.K. Readdy told the Minister that "You wanted to create your own dummies in that state...who could carry the so-called Congress mission."<sup>27</sup>

All the opposition parties were critical of the Government's action. Lal Singh (Akali) described the suspension of the constitution as "unwarranted, undemocratic and unconstitutional" and said that the Central Governments' action in doing this was "a challenge to all men in India who cannot see eye to eye with the Congress." Regarding the law and order position, he said it could not be said to be worse in Pepsu than in Rajasthan, Surashtra or Punjab. S. P. Mukerjee, leader of the National Democratic Group said, "Pepsu was the only Ministry in India which was non-Congress. It was, therefore necessary for the Government to be extra-careful in applying the emergency provisions of the constitution. . . . Members of ruling party should not look at the matter from a party point of view. What was now sought to be done would sound the death-knell of democracy in the country."

Sarangdhar Das said there was no doubt that because the Pepsu Ministry was a non-Congress Ministry, President's rule was being established.<sup>28</sup> Pepsu Kisan Sabha, a Communist sponsored organisation termed the suspension of the constitution in Pepsu as 'Dictatorial action of the Central Government, massacre of democracy and naked dance of its anti-people policies.'<sup>29</sup> Mr. P. Sundarayya, leader of the Communist Parliamentary Party denied that the Communists were running a parallel Government in 80 villages of Pepsu. He said that villagers tired of corrupt officials had simply restored to resolving their local disputes amicably in conformity with old Indian tradition. In Pepsu, he said, "When the Congress and Akalis—both Biswedat-ridden parties—had

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27. *Ibid.*, p. 2182.

28. "President's rule in Pepsu criticised in the House of People." See the *Spokesman Weekly*, Delhi, 18 March, 1953. Ch. Ram Singh, a former minister revealed that Giani Zail Singh had told him that the Centre had given a sum of Rs. one lac to revive the Congress in Pepsu. See *The Ranjit* (Punjabi), Patiala, 7 May, 1953.

29. *The Tribune*, 20 March, 1953. In the Council of States, P. Sundarayya challenged the Home Minister to give the name of a single village where they had collected revenue and rent through Panchayats and utilised them. See *The Tribune* and *The Statesman*, 26 March, 1953.



failed to suppress the peasant movement, the Central Government had taken over the administration in Pepsu to launch an offensive for restoring lands to absentee landlords as was done in Telengana." He claimed that he had ample material to prove "dacoits' alliance with Biswedars and certain corrupt officials."<sup>30</sup> In an editorial in *The Ranjit* Patiala local paper wrote that when the Congressites failed to oust the United Front Government by democratic means, then they planned to get the constitution suspended in Pepsu and thereafter to uproot the very existence of Pepsu—Homeland of Sikhs—by merging it with Punjab.<sup>31</sup> In an article published in a Kotkapura based paper 'Lok Yug' on 21 March 1953, the author wrote that the Communist Party, Forward Block and other Leftist Parties by making a joint front, should inflict defeat to the alliance of *Rajas*, *Kanwars* and *Biswedars* in the coming elections. Rarewala group made provocative speeches in a conference held at Doraha. One of the speakers said that Nehru is a low type (*ghatia*) man, Hindi is the language of the fools, girls of the community (*bhaichara*) of Jawaharlal Nehru were sold in Ghazni for six annas each, these *baniyas* and *brahmins* do not know how to rule, the Hindus could never be a martial race, Shri Rajgopal Acharya became naked while taking salute at a military parade etc."<sup>32</sup> These words indicate that some members of the Rarewala group lost sense of morality.

As to demand for the early election an organisation called "Pepsu Civil Liberties Union" was formed at a Convention attended by 200 delegates held at Patiala on 10 May, 1953. Dara Singh (former Development Minister), Tara Chand Gupta and Inder Singh (former Revenue Minister) were elected as President, General Secretary and Vice-President respectively. The convention demanded the suspension of application of the Preventive Detention Act in the provincial regime of the Adviser and punishment to police officials responsible for torturing undertial *kisans*.<sup>33</sup>

Pendyala Satyanarain Rau I.C.S. former, Regional Commissioner of States and adviser to the Rajpramukh of Madhya Bharat was appointed

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30. *The Tribune*, 17 March, 1953; *The Times of India*, 24 March, 1953 and *The Hindustan Standard*, 26 March, 1953.

31. *The Ranjit* (Punjabi), Patiala, 20 March, 1953; *Weekly Cross Roads*, 22 March 1953.

32. *The Tej*, Delhi, 21 March, 1953.

33. *The Statesman*, 12 May, 1953.

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Administrator of Pepsu.<sup>34</sup> On his arrival at Patiala he said, "The rule of the President, which is of a temporary character, is designed to put down violence and lawlessness at all costs to re-establish the rule of law, to discourage communalism, to eradicate corruption in the public services and generally to restore decencies of public life in the State."<sup>35</sup> The popular regimes, whether of the Congress or of the United Front, had failed to cope with the deteriorating situation and to establish the conditions of security and peace. The law and order condition in the State could be attributed to the prevailing political confusion. Government in Patiala remained torn by party or group faction and those in power were more anxious to hold it than to do anything else.<sup>36</sup>

By 208 votes to 60 the House of the people (Lok Sabha) approved the establishment of President's rule in Pepsu on March 12, 1953. The Rajya Sabha (Upper House) approved it on 26 March, 1953.<sup>37</sup>

The Council of States laid down five objectives for the interim administration to perform :<sup>38</sup>

1. Restoration and stabilization of law and order.
2. Improvement of the administrative service.
3. Execution of the preliminary work for holding elections.
4. Carrying forward the agrarian reform programme.
5. Continuance of the development schemes as envisaged in the Five Year Plan.

In Pepsu, Congressmen welcomed the change. The Akali Dal led a massive public demonstration in Pepsu against the Presidential rule. Dr K.N. Katju's "irrefutable case for President Rule, was described as an able lawyer's good arguments in a weak case. Otherwise there was no occasion for supposing that there was any break-down of the

34. *Akali Patrika*, Jullundur, 11 March 1953. P.S. Rau—born in 1895—after a brilliant career at Madras and Oxford University, secured a first class first in history from the Madras University and honours in history from Oxford. He passed the London examination for admission to the I.C.S. in 1917 and joined the Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh) Cadre of I.C.S. in 1918. He was awarded Padma Vibhushna in 1954 by the President of Indian Union "for Distinguished Service of a high order as Adviser to Rajpramukh PEPSU." See *The Tribune*, 28 April, 1954.

35. *The Tribune*, 11 March 1953; *The Ajit* (Urdu), Jullundur, 12 March 1953.

36. 'Task before Mr. Rau,' *The Tribune*, 13 March, 1953.

37. *Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol. I, No. 17, Part II, 5 March, 1953; Vol. II, No. 4, March 12, 1953; *Rajya Sabha Debates*, Vol. VIII, No. 21, 25-26 March, 1953.

38. *The Hindustan Times*, 28 March, 1953.

constitution, except the fact that Rarewala was unseated. The argument of political instability, political manoeuvring by parties, are devoid of logic and strength."<sup>39</sup>

The Presidential rule was extended for another period of six months by the Lok Sabha on 16 September 1953 and by the Rajya Sabha on 14 September 1953.<sup>40</sup> The debate in both the Houses followed the old pattern. The Centre was charged by the opposition for delaying midterm polls and imposing a dictatorial regime in the State. Home Minister Katju's reply to the debate was arrogantly blunt. "In a State where we see fathers murdering sons, brothers murdering brothers, sons murdering mothers and fathers and what not... . The President's rule should be allowed to continue for two or three years so that we can completely solve this problem to everybody's satisfaction."<sup>41</sup>

Hukam Singh charged that the Government had adopted this course for the purpose of seeing that the Congress was returned to power. He further charged the Centre of having introduced "communalism", into the State, having victimised officers belonging to the Sikh community and of having imported officers of the Adviser's choice belonging to a different community from outside.<sup>42</sup> Ranjit Singh, an independent member from Pepsu said that during the last six months the law and order situation had improved, but during this period the Adviser had victimised several officers belonging to one community.<sup>43</sup> Dr Hirdayanath Kunzru pertinently enquired if the administration had been going down and the people had been suffering. He further said that the fact of the matter was that there was far too much political chopping and changing and the party in power at the Centre had looked on while the party executive outside tried to resolve group differences among the political elements in Pepsu.<sup>44</sup> Like the governments which came into being after the elections, the earlier governments were preoccupied with the business of marshalling political strength. In both periods the leading personalities were the same; they were shuffled around in the care-taker period and

39. Pepsu National Front, *The President Rule in Pepsu* (Patiala, n.d.), p. 6.

40. *Lok Sabha Debates*, Part II, Vol. VIII, No. 33, 18 September, 1953 and *Rajya Sabha Debates*, Vol. IV, No. 17, 14 September 1953. See also *The Hindustan* (Hindi), New Delhi, 18 September, 1953.

41. *Rajya Sabha Debates*, 14 September, 1953, pp. 2204-05.

42. *The Hindustan Standard* and *Hindustan* (Hindi), New Delhi, 18 Sept., 1953.

43. *Ibid.*

44. "Pepsu in Parliament"—Editorial, *The Tribune*, 18 Sept., 1953.

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they kept on shuffling around even after the legislature was duly constituted by election. Government changed so rapidly that it was difficult to say which government precisely was responsible for which act of omission or commission. The widest changes were bandied about and government and the opposition freely accused each other of conniving at or even aiding and abetting the most serious crimes.

In the Rajya Sabha, Dr Ambedkar criticised the Government for resorting to Article 356 of the constitution in regard to Pepsu. He said occasional shifting in group loyalties did not mean breaking down of constitutional government. The provision had been taken advantage of because of the Congress conception of the unity of India—having Congress Governments from Cape Comorin to East Punjab.<sup>45</sup> Dr Ambedkar was of the opinion that the Government had not succeeded in proving that the constitution in the State had failed and that there was no possibility of a party holding the responsibility of government. The existence of looting, he thought, could not be a valid ground for introducing President's Rule. In other states, where serious rioting had taken place the Government had instead sent the army to assist the civil administration in coping with the disorder.<sup>46</sup>

The argument of dacoities and murders did not appeal to the opposition for continuance of President's Rule. There was no reason, why Pepsu should be particularly singled out for this treatment when dacoities and murders were on the increase in Rajasthan, Vindhya Pradesh and parts of U. P. The plea of good government which the Administrator had conferred on Pepsu was ridiculed. On the same plea it could be said that an invitation should be sent to the British to return to India.<sup>47</sup>

Hira Singh Chinaria of Pepsu Congress said that the Central Government had given a high position to feudal overlords against whom the Pepsu Congress men had fought all along. He further said, "The root cause is the feudal system still existing and flourishing there. Conditions cannot improve in Pepsu as long as the Rajpramukh, who is encouraging communalism and feudal elements, remains in power." He said that the

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45. *Rajya Sabha Debates*, Vol. IV, No. 17, 14 Sept., 1953, pp. 2252 : see also Dr Ambedkar in the Parliament on a "Continuation of President's Rule in Pepsu." *The Hindustan Times*, 15 Sept., 1953.

46. 'Extending President Rule in Pepsu,' *The Statesman*, 15 Sept., 1953.

47. *Ibid.* ; *Nav Bharat Times* (Hindi), Delhi, 15 Sept., 1953.

only remedy was to merge Pepsu with the Punjab.<sup>48</sup> Sri Sarangadhar Das a member of Praja Socialist Party from Orissa in this hard hitting speech said that the President's Rule was a "smoke screen" for consolidating the position of the Congress in Pepsu. Through agrarian reforms the Congress wanted to secure the rights of the *biswedars* and ensure the latter's support for the Congress. What was going on in Pepsu was "a process of mutual admiration between the *biswedars* and the Congress."<sup>49</sup>

Dr C. K. V. Rama Rao, Communist member from Madras moved a substitute resolution for an early election. He said that the present "reprehensible rule" supported the vested interests at the expense of the toilers and the peasantry. "The present Government has very kindly given liberal compensation to the superior land-owner whose ownership right was confined to collection of revenue. Even the United Front Government, which represented very substantial *biswedars* had agreed to give only nominal compensation to them; when it is a question of vested interests, princes or feudal lords his (Dr Katju's) heart melts like ice-cream."<sup>50</sup>

Dr N.M. Jaisooriya (P.D.F. Hyderabad) said that the very name of Pepsu was horrible as it reminded one of dyspepsia. No wonder something went wrong with it every now and then. "Absorb Pepsu in the Punjab and its dyspepsia will stop." He further said that the Government had made a claim that the number of dacoities had gone down in Pepsu after the administration had been taken over. But the origin of dacoity in Pepsu lay in the fact that *biswedars* collected rents by force. It was these *biswedars* who had encouraged this dacoity business to terrorise the peasant. Now the police had taken over the task of collecting rent which meant that they were doing now what dacoits were made to do earlier.<sup>51</sup>

The Adviser's rule in Pepsu proved that the President's regime in actual practice had led to the consolidation of the Rajpramukh's

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48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*

50. Dr C.K.V. Rao's speech in the Parliament as reported in the *Times of India*, 18 Sept., 1953.

51. *Ibid.* N.M. Jaisooriya quoted extracts from the report of the First Settlement Officer in that area Mr Young, who worked there from 1901 to 1908 and said that in this report it was made clear that the *biswedars* were originally just rent collectors. The officials had all along sided with the *biswedars* and formed an alliance with them against the peasants. See "Extension of President Rule in Pepsu," *The Hindustan Times*, 18 Sept., 1953.

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position, strengthened the hold of the palace clique in the services and emboldened the *biswedars* to strike at the peasantry in alliance with the police. In the Vindhya Pradesh Assembly 12 Congress members were unseated,<sup>52</sup> and despite this development the constitution was not suspended there. Pepsu was singled out because the majority of public leaders belonged to different parties in the Assembly and some of them raised the demand to abolish the institution of Rajpramukh and introduce radical agrarian reforms and to effect basic changes in the feudal bureaucrat-ridden and repressive set up of administration.

The Rau's regime, as said by Teja Singh Tiwana, P.S.P. leader (General Secretary Pepsu Praja-Socialist Party) in a statement, had failed to fulfil its role. The administration remained closely attached to the apron-strings of the Congress party in the State. He added, "only one set of communal officers were sacked. The other set took shelter behind the State Congress bosses and were left untouched. A United Front Minister was prosecuted but what had prevented the Adviser from instituting a thorough enquiry into the deeds of the past Congress Ministers. There were lakhs of acres of culturable waste land and not even one acre was acquired from landlords and handed over to the cultivators. In fact the President's rule in Pepsu, added Teja Singh Tiwana, did not improve anything except the arrogance of the local Congressmen who openly asserted that it was the Congress rule. "In short the President's rule was white cap rule through the steel frame man."<sup>53</sup>

In replying to the debate Dr Katju said that the Government was anxious to hold elections in Pepsu "as early and in as free and unfettered a manner" as possible. He further said that it was no use "manufacturing grievances in order to whip up public enthusiasm." He described as 'completely false' allegation to the effect that there was an "iron curtain in Pepsu."<sup>54</sup> He said that some members had spoken of the President's rule as if it meant the rule of a great autocrat. In real substance, the President's rule was the rule of Parliament. Pepsu would never have been discussed in the Council but for the President's rule. Parliament was in a position to make or unmake Pepsu laws. The affairs of the State Government had been taken over from the people of Pepsu and was with the entire people of India. There was the Parliamentary

52. *The Statesman*, 12 May, 1953.

53. Personal interview with Prof. Teja Singh Tiwana.

54. *The Hindustan Times*, 18 Sept., 1953.

Committee, which was consulted with regard to laws enacted in Pepsu.<sup>55</sup>

Dr Katju said that the deterioration in law and order in the State was partly the consequence of the politically unstable conditions which developed in the State after the elections. With no party having a clear working majority in the State Legislature, politics became a game of putting up and pulling down Ministers. With members crossing the floor, according to their calculations of where their personal fortunes lay. On the top of these intrigues for office and power came the setting aside of several elections which precipitated something in the nature of miniature general election and practically unseated the Ministry. If at this point, the President had not stepped in to take over the administration of the State on the recommendations of the Rajpramukh, the State would have descended into a chaos from which it would have been a herculean task to pull it out and restore orderliness and efficiency.<sup>56</sup>

Col. Raghbir Singh (then President of the Pepsu State Congress) said that his party's attitude towards the administration of the Adviser, was one of the "whole-hearted" and not merely "responsive" cooperation. The President's rule in the State was the rule of the Centre where Congress was in power.<sup>57</sup>

## II

The primary objects, which the Government of India had set before it, was the restoration of normal conditions in the field of law and order.<sup>58</sup> The area of Pepsu was always considered notorious, as an abode of outlaws and desperadoes.<sup>59</sup> This was partly due to its peculiar geographical situation and partly because of lack of efficient administration as well as absence of coordination amongst the various convenanting States in fighting out dacoits.<sup>60</sup> Things became precarious and for some months there was a collapse of law and order. The Pepsu police could not get over the change that the integration of the States

55. *The Times of India*, 17 Sept., 1953.

56. "Perseverance in Pepsu," *The Hindustan Times*, 17 September, 1953.

57. *The Times of India*, 27 May, 1953.

58. "It was solely with the object of restoring law and order and creating conditions in which the people of Pepsu could exercise their vote in free and fair manner that the President's rule was introduced." See P.N.F., *op. cit.*, p. 10.

59. *Pepsu Since Inauguration*; *op. cit.*, p. 21.

60. *Ibid.*—large areas on the banks of Ghaggar in the State remained uncultivated and covered with thick jungles. These places, for a long time were used as places of asylum by gangs of criminals. See *The Report 1951-52*, p. 7.

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brought about and had not adapted itself to the new circumstances in which it was called upon to work. It had also not kept pace with the progress that the gangs of criminals had made in the use of weapons. The dacoits who were oftenly drawn from ex-army personnel were thoroughly trained in the use of weapons, but it was not so with the police. Other factors which contributed towards the deterioration of the law and order situation was the ill-considered release orders of detenues by the previous governments. One government, had way through the general elections, released all those who were under detention for subversive activities, while the next government, not to be outdone by their predecessor, released immediately on assuming office, no fewer than 70 persons, under trial of offence of rioting, criminal trespass and unlawful assembly in connection with the agrarian disturbances.<sup>61</sup> They cancelled all warrants of detention issued against subversive elements which were awaiting execution. Dacoits were given protection and ammunition by some *biswedars*. It was alleged that some dacoits enjoyed the shelter of the Rajmata of Pepsu. In reply to a question the Finance Minister, C. D. Deshmukh said, "There was no question of the Rajmata giving shelter. She had a large farm and it was reported that two of her employees had given some shelter to the dacoits."<sup>62</sup> The criminal elements fully exploited such situation and intensified their activities. Some of Pepsu's area as local-workers put it were "Steeped in traditions of crimes and dacoities." The exploits of some dacoits formed the basis of local folk-songs.<sup>63</sup>

During the year 1949, 21 gangs comprising about 138 outlaws operated in Pepsu. 17 more gangs of about 78 gangsters came to the notice of Police during the year 1950. There was a sharp increase in the number of heinous crimes under the heads-murder, burglary, dacoities, robberies and hurt. On account of the alarming increase in the violence, the holding up of passenger buses and robbing and attacking of passengers caught the special fancy of the criminally inclined persons. Armed culprits held up passengers and brutally murdered policemen travelling

61. What the President has done for Pepsu March-August 1953 (Patiala, 1953), p. 4.

62. Debate the House of People as recorded in *The Hindustan Times*, 4 May, 1953. See also Nanak Chand Naz's article on Pepsu Published in *The Parbhat*, Jullundur, 7 May, 1953. When the question of the grant of pension to Rajmata came before the House of people, Comd. Rama Rao and Ch. Inder Singh (then ex-Minister of Pepsu) revealed that the Rajmata of Patiala used to harbour a notorious dacoit. The Rajmata even went to pay tribute when he (Janga) was shot dead. See *The Naya Zamana* (Urdu) ; Jullundur, 19 September, 1953.

63. *Ibid.*, see also *The Statesman*, 10 January, 1953.



by these lorries and government's arms and ammunition were looted.<sup>64</sup> The gangs of Janga, Teja and Mehru (Meher Singh) of Gharangna, Bhura, and Ram Lal, notorious dacoits were found responsible for the occurrences.<sup>65</sup> The gangs of Billu with 19 members, Banta with five member, and Bikar, Balwant of Chhajli, Mukhtiar of Kingra and inter-state refugee dacoits gangas were liquidated by the Pepsu police in 1952.<sup>66</sup> The gangs of Kartara and his five members, Mukanda's gangs with 8 members, Bakshi with 18, Ajaiba with 10, Dulla with 4, Karnaila with 6, Dayal with 9 and other gangs of dacoits perpetrated the most heinous crimes of violence in the state.<sup>67</sup> Home Guards in their various armed encounters killed 30 notorious dacoits including Bakshi and Dulla who were terror to the countryside. Apart from shooting down these desperadoes the Home Guards captured 114 equally dreaded terrorists and criminals and recovered large quantities of arms and ammunition.<sup>68</sup>

As has been stated, one of the primary aims of Rau was the restoration of normal conditions in Pepsu. This object was achieved during his tenure of one year to some extent. Incidences of serious crimes in relation to area and population of the state were brought down to reasonable proportions. The volume of crime and the number of cases of the more serious categories that had occurred in the state during the ten months of President's rule as compared with similar figures for the corresponding period of the years 1949 to 1952 were<sup>69</sup> :

64. In Mulepore near village Rarewala, three constables and two public men were killed. In Maur Mandi, district Bhatinda, the dacoits after looting the shop of a Mahajan took away the two victims and a police constable with them. See *The Report 1951-52, op. cit.*, p. 7.
65. *Ibid.* Janga of Dakala's gang Chamaras gang, Teja of Ugrahari gang, Mehru of Gharangana's gang, Chandgi and Hem Raj gang. See Master Tara Singh, "Jange Daku Bare Manu ki Patta Ha," *The Akali* (Punjabi), Jullundur, 5 April, 1953. Janga helped Col. Raghbir Singh in his electioneering campaign. He was a close associate of Raghbir Singh's family and this fact was well known to Jawahar Lal Nehru. This was revealed by Brish Bhan, Ex-Chief Minister of Pepsu in an interview at Chandigarh.
66. *Ibid.*
67. *Report 1951-52, op. cit.*, pp. 6-7 and *Pepsu Since Inauguration, op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.
68. *Ibid.* For administrative purpose, the whole area where the Home Guards organisation was established was divided into 4 units viz., Patiala, Barnala, Sangrur and Bhatinda each under the Unit Commander. The greatest benefit from the Home Guards was regarding the defence of individual villagers from all unsocial elements. See *Report 1951-52*, p. 14.
69. *President Rule in Pepsu, March 1953 to March 1954* (Patiala, 1954), p. 2.

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Year	Murder	Dacoity	Robbery	Burglary	Hurt
1949	291	91	350	2060	995
1950	271	59	342	1708	953
1951	340	71	293	1939	1192
1952	302	76	231	1457	974
1953	178	8	105	930	738

As indicated above there was a drop of 41 percent in the number of murders in 1953 in comparison with the corresponding period of 1952. The decrease was even sharper under the head 'dacoity'. The number of robberies was less than half of last year. Their number had gone down steadily since organised gangs were liquidated. The violent crime in Pepsu, which had at one time exceeded that of the whole of the Punjab, which had about four times its area and population, was now normal in the sense that its incidence was practically on the same level as in an equivalent adjoining area of Punjab.

No fewer than 61 outlaws were shot dead in armed encounters during this period. The number of proclaimed offenders and military deserters stood at 362 and 135, respectively, at the beginning of March 1953.<sup>70</sup> It was realised that these proclaimed offenders and deserters furnished the majority of recruits to the gangs of dacoits, therefore, great emphasis was laid on rounding them up. As a result of the efforts, their number was brought down to 195 and 67 respectively by the end of December 1953.<sup>71</sup> The possession of unlicensed arms was extremely common in the State and they were a strong crime inducing factor in

70. *Ibid.* Dacoit Kartara was killed by the Bhatinda police after a three hour pitched encounter at Kishangarh. See *The Tribune*, 29 May, 1953. Gurnam Singh alias Harnaek Singh notorious out-law was shot dead in an encounter near Khanna by Pepsu police. He belonged to the Bhura's gang. Bhura was killed on 7 April 1953. See *The Delhi Express*, 21 April 1953 and *The Hindustan Times*, 9 April, 1953. A batch of 21 absconders and 11 proclaimed offenders belonging to seven villages in Nabha and Bhatinda surrendered themselves to the police. *The Tribune*, 15 April, 1953. Naik Sadhu Singh Bajigar who deserted from the border military force in 1951 had been terrorising villagers in Sangrur. He was killed after a 3 hour encounter. Dacoit Joginder Singh hold up Ashwani Kumar, I.G. Police, Himachal Pradesh near Naldera and the I.G. had a miraculous escape. Joginder Singh who was barely 28 years belonged to Barnala. He carried a prize on his head. See *The Times of India*, 6 Oct., 1953.

71. *Ibid.*, and *The Statesman*, 4 May, 1953.

its life. Stress was, therefore, laid on the suppression of this form of crime and no fewer than 2259 such weapons were recovered.<sup>72</sup> To liquidate the formidable gang operating under the leadership of Janga and his companion Chand, who were responsible for commission of 117 cases of murder, dacoity, hold ups and other offences, an officer was put on special duty in the second half of 1952. But it was in July 1953 that both Janga and Chand were shot dead after an encounter which lasted four hours.<sup>73</sup>

The Rau's Government gave special attention to building up the organisation, equipment training and morale of the police force to render them more effective in the performance of their duties. The complex agrarian problem in the State had an important bearing on the occurrence of crime. When the Adviser took over the administration in March 1953 the agrarian problem had already taken a serious turn.<sup>74</sup> Rau told the villagers that the Government would not recognise any agreement between landlords and tenants which had been brought about by coercion.<sup>75</sup>

In the sphere of revenue collection, within ten days of the imposition of President rule, revenue officials collected rupee three lacs from some of the most difficult tenancy areas. In several areas, land was restored to landlords which the Communists workers had seized from them and distributed among cultivators.<sup>76</sup> Prof. Hiren Mukerjee, acting leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha said in a convention at Patiala on 16 May, 1953 that the President's rule through the Adviser had led to consolidation of the position of Pepsu's Rajpramukh and the people had been delivered to the tender mercies of an inefficient corrupt and wooden feudal bureaucratic set up. *Biswedars* had struck at peasantry in alliance with police and Pepsu had been punished for their heroic fight for abolition of the institution of Rajpramukh and introduction of radical land reforms. Armed police in their hundreds raided and encircled villages for realisation of land revenue.<sup>77</sup> P. T. Punnoose, Communist member

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72. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

73. *The Tribune*, 11 July, 1954.

74. *What the President has done for Pepsu?* p. 4; *The Times of India*, 14 May, 1953.

75. *The Tribune*, 15 April, 1953.

76. *The Statesman*, 4 May, 1953.

77. *The Blitz*, Weekly, Bombay, 17 May, 1953. Nine kisans of village Bakhora, Bakhshiwala, Kudal and Ali Sher (of Sunam tehsil) troubled areas during the

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of Parliament said that the dacoit menace<sup>78</sup> in Pepsu would be a thing of the past if immediate steps were taken to restore land to the legitimate tillers of the soil. He alleged that the police, district officers, *biswedars* and moneylenders surrounded villages and forced the peasants "at a point of the bayonet to pay up the arrears here and not within a few hours"<sup>79</sup> The zeal of the police to restore tranquillity in pursuance of the Adviser's avowed policy was overdone. Some of the members of the police force resorted to questionable methods to bring to book unsocial elements. Villagers, particularly Harijans, were alarmed at this trend.<sup>80</sup> Congressmen attributed such acts of police highhandedness to the influence of the opponents of the present administration, who were out to estrange Harijans from the Congress.<sup>81</sup>

Bhupinder Singh Mann, General Secretary of the National Front said, "...I charge the present Government that it has spread an iron curtain over news and many daring dacoities committed recently have not been reported in the press."<sup>82</sup> In its Pepsu column in *The Blitz* weekly the correspondent wrote that in their wild dacoit hunt, some of the Pepsu police officers had run amuck and innocent citizens had been disappeared over night. Others were being tortured in underground cells.<sup>83</sup>

Improvement of law and order position, was the chief aim of the Adviser's regime. Rau travelled long distances to study the position personally. He had for his aid a detachment of mounted constabulary for action against dacoits and out-laws. Some of the unruly Communists and some criminals were rounded up and confidence was restored in some of the affected areas.<sup>84</sup>

But what was mostly done by the Adviser's Government was that an

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*Continued from page 174]*

agrarian unrest who had been absconding since 1949 surrendered themselves for arrest. They alleged that they had been harassed by the police on one ground or the other. *The Tribune*, 5 April, 1953.

78. P.T. Punnoose was one of the three Communist Members of the Parliament appointed by the All India Kisan Sabha to tour villages in Pepsu and record the grievances of peasants. Another member was K. Gopal Rao, President of the Telengana Kisan Sabha.
79. *The Tribune*, 16 May, 1953.
80. *The Times of India*, 14 May, 1953.
81. *Ibid.*
82. *The Tribune*, 3 May, 1953.
83. *Blitz*, Weekly, Bombay, 2 May, 1953.
84. P.N.F. *op.cit.*, p. 11.

iron curtain was thrown over the reports of acts of lawlessness. Crimes were hushed up and a number of cases of dacoities and robberies were never registered with the aim of keeping down the incidence of serious crimes.<sup>85</sup> So far as throwing the iron curtain over news, Rau's regime was called the regime of typical I.C.S. Officer who frowned at exposures, stifled freedom of press and governed by threats and promises. Circular letters were issued to all heads of the departments, S.Ps. and D.Cs, forbidding them to release any news about the law and order position except through the office of the public relations.<sup>86</sup>

Previous popular regime whether of Congress or of the United Front, had failed to cope with the deteriorating situation and to establish the conditions of security and peace. Criminals not only indulged with impunity in their depredations, but also held in some cases the kidnapped persons to ransom. The people's faith in the administration was shaken to such an extent that they would negotiate with the dacoits rather than seek the police help. It has to be admitted that during both regimes the situation was bad and what was more, the conditions of lawlessness were often exploited for personal and political ends.

Rau was of the opinion that the law and order situation in the State was bound up with agrarian reform. This was true to some extent. It was, however, incorrect to think that the general lawlessness, resulting in dacoities and kidnappings, derived solely from a situation which called for agrarian reforms. This lawlessness was the direct result of political confusion preceding and following the general elections in 1952. Government in Patiala had been torn by party or group faction and those in power were more anxious to hold it than to do anything else.

The President's rule in Pepsu came to an end in March 1954. The heavy incidences of serious crimes in relation to area and population of the State were reduced to reasonable proportions. The feeling of insecurity panic and uneasiness gave place to a certain extent to confidence in the ability of administration. Almost all the organised gangs of dacoits were liquidated. Feeling encouraged, the Government released, 171 detenus jailed for harbouring and helping dacoits and the unrealised balance of Rs. 40,000 of punitive tax was remitted in two villages.<sup>87</sup> The Government recovered 2259 unlicensed weapons which included five sten-guns,

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85. *Ibid.*

86. *Ibid.*, p. 12; Bhupinder Singh Mann, *The Partisan Rule of Mr Rau* (Patiala, 1953).

87. *The Indian Express* and *The Tribune*, 17 Feb., 1954.

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two Thompson guns, 71 rifles and 79 hand grenades.<sup>88</sup>

The most notable achievement in this respect was the destruction of Janga's gang, which had been a veritable terror during the last four years.<sup>89</sup>

The swelling tide of serious crimes like murders and dacoities receded to 116 murders and six dacoities during the Presidential rule it constituted a marked improvement on the crimesheet of the corresponding period of 1952. On the whole crime declined by about 40 percent.<sup>90</sup>

### III

Some of the coveining States, such as Kapurthala, Faridkot, Malerkotla, Nalagarh and Kalsia having an area of 643, 634, 166, 274 and 192 square miles respectively, were very small.<sup>91</sup> The other States comprised different geographical areas separated from each other. The rulers had to set up smaller districts and tehsils to control fragmented small units. This naturally led to the creation of far too many districts and tehsils in these States. For instance Nabha and Jind, with an area of 965 and 1280 sq. miles, and population of 3.40 lacs and 7.23 lacs respectively, had as many as three districts each. Kapurthala had five tehsils, Nalagarh two and Kalsia three. There were 17 districts in all the former States.<sup>92</sup>

The Union had a total area of 10,011 sq. miles with a population of 35 lac. It had been divided into eight districts, four sub-divisions, 25 tehsils and 83 police stations.<sup>93</sup> The territories of all the states were divided into four main blocks, the main one comprising Patiala, Barnala, Bhatinda, Sangrur and Fatehgarh Sahib districts; the second Kapurthala district consisting of two enclaves surrounded by Jullundur districts, the

88. *Ibid.*

89. *The Hindustan Times*, 15 Sept., 1953. A Press Party just after their return from the area where gangs of Janga and Bhura used to take shelter (village Dakala, near Patiala), stated that more than 15 marriage ceremonies of village girls which had continued to be postponed during the last three years due to the fear of Janga had been solemnised under police protection. See *The Statesman*, 3 May, 1953.

90. *Ibid.*

91. *Tej* (Urdu), Delhi, 4 July 1953.

92. A slight change in the territorial re-distribution was brought about as a result of an agreement about the exchange of enclaves between Pepsu and Punjab.

93. *The Tribune*, 17 July, 1953.

third Kandaghat district in Simla Hills and the fourth Mahendragarh district surrounded by southern districts of Punjab. The average size of the district was 1200 sq. miles. Kandaghat district had an area of 592 sq. miles with a population of 1.47 lac; Fatehgarh Sahib 522 sq. miles with a population of 2.37 lac and Kapurthala 643 sq. miles with a population of 2.95 lac.<sup>94</sup> These districts were smaller than most tehsils of part 'A' States. No State in the whole of India had a district of less than 2000 sq. miles.<sup>95</sup> The minimum was 2052 sq. miles in West Bengal which was a very thickly populated State. The average population of a district in West Bengal was 16.54 lac while the corresponding figure for Pepsu was only 4.37 lac.<sup>96</sup> In some other 'B' class States, the size of a district was thrice as much as in Pepsu. Mysore had 3277 sq. miles and 10.08 lac persons to a district; Travancore and Cochin 2286 sq. miles and 23.20 lac persons to a district; Hyderabad 5,136 sq. miles and 11.66 lac persons to a district, Saurashtra, which had been formed out of 300 states, had 8.27 lac persons to a district and the average size of the district was 4290 sq. miles.<sup>97</sup>

On the formation of Pepsu, the disadvantage of there being too many fragmented parts of former States disappeared to some extent, yet the number of districts was kept at a bloated figure. Various factors had influenced the decision to have as many as eight districts. Regional pride and local susceptibilities of the people who lived in the capital towns of former States had also to be taken into account. Regardless of administrative need, it was thought necessary to keep all the capital towns of the former States as districts or sub-divisions. That was why Nalagarh, Nabha, Malerkotla and Faridkot were created as sub-divisions. Nabha was only 14 miles from Patiala and was connected by a good road. It was strange that Faridkot was sub-division of Bhatinda district; as well as the temporary headquarters of the district, Kandaghat, Kapurthala and Fatehgarh Sahib were created as districts, though they were smaller than a tehsil in size.<sup>98</sup> In all these districts contradictory

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94. The average area of a district in Punjab and Madhya Bharat was 3000 sq. miles and 5000 sq. miles in Madras and Rajasthan. See *The Hindustan Times*, 15 Sept., 1953.

95. *The Tribune*, 3 July, 1953.

96. *Ibid.*, The biggest district in Pepsu was Bhatinda with an area of 2248 sq. miles and a population of 6.7 lac, while the smallest was Fatehgarh Sahib. See *The Hindustan Times*, 15 Sept., 1953.

97. *Ibid.*

98. *The Tribune*, 3 July, 1953.

aspirations were then voiced by a different section of the people. Some were in favour of merger with adjacent areas of Punjab and Himachal. It was thought that the district officials would be able to control this feeling and the people would give up this aspiration if the towns were made district headquarters. These led to the creation of these three districts, but even the main block which could conveniently be divided into only three districts, was divided into five small districts without much justification. The result was an excessive drain on the financial resources of the small Union. It will not be out of place to mention here that the administration of a district, sub-division, tehsil and a sub-tehsil then cost annually Rs. 80,000, Rs. 50,000 and Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 10,000 respectively.<sup>99</sup> This cost was likely to go up when the district offices were to be manned by members of I.A.S. and I.P.S. The Administrator thought that there should have been only four districts and about 16 tehsils. All the three districts of Kandaghat, Kapurthala and Fatehgarh Sahib could be sub-divisions. This would reduce the annual cost of administration by about Rs. 6 lacs.<sup>100</sup> The Adviser considered it as criminal to squander the financial resources in the upkeep of a large number of unnecessary district administrative units.

The Government apprehended that the reaction of the public in reducing the districts would be unfavourable. They would have natural grievances because they would have to travel at a considerable expense and inconvenience to get redress at the hands of the district officers. It was argued that but for one or two outlying districts Pepsu enjoyed the advantage of being a city State, with small distances and a net work of small sized administrative units which were of very great convenience to the people. A reduction in the number of districts, sub-divisions and tehsils would do incalculable harm to petty traders and shopkeepers. This would hamper the growth of towns and thus put a check on trade and commerce and adversely affect the prosperity of the people.<sup>101</sup>

The reduction in the administrative divisions was essential both from financial and economic points of view. Every successive Government strove to accomplish, they appointed committees, they formulated their proposals; they invited public opinion, but on the whole failed to carry out their object. It had been given to the President to achieve what

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99. *The Tribune*, 3 July 1953.

100. *Ibid.*

101. Surendra Nath Khosla, "Pepsu Districts", *The Tribune*, 6 July, 1953.



the previous Governments had set their hearts upon.<sup>102</sup>

Gian Singh Rarewala who with the Patiala Akali leaders opposed the reduction in the number of districts had previously proposed that the number should be brought down to six. In a conference at Barnala on July 4, 1950 he had said that for a population of 34 lacs and area of 10,000 sq. miles it was not necessary to have eight districts.<sup>103</sup> Subsequently, the State Government notified the intention of the Government.<sup>104</sup> The question of distribution of the districts was postponed until a popular ministry came into being. After the General Election of 1952 the popular ministry remained busy with party manoeuvring and it did not have time to take up this question.<sup>105</sup>

There had been "a sort of tremendous manufactured excitement about the reduction of the number of districts. The revenue of Pepsu was Rs. 6 crores. The cost of administration was Rs. 3 crores."<sup>106</sup> In 1949, a committee was appointed to examine the question of reducing the number of district headquarters. It recommended the abolition of three out of eight districts, viz. Barala, Kapurthala and Kandaghat and the conversion of six tehsils into sub-tehsils.<sup>107</sup> It was then decided that for administrative purposes districts of Fatehgar Sahib, Kohistan (Kandaghat) and Barnala would be under the Deputy Commissioner and District Superintendent of Police of adjoining districts. Pepsu National Front expressed great concern over the reduction of the number of districts and tehsils "whether the Adviser's Government being of nature of a 'care-taker' regime only is authorised to do so is a debatable question. The question of altering the boundaries of the districts and tehsils is a

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102. *Ibid.* The tentative decision to reduce the number of districts was published in *Pepsu Government Gazette* in June, 1950 for eliciting public opinion. See *The Tribune*, 25 July, 1953; *Akali (Punjabi)*, Jullundur, 22 July, 1953. The Committee which included the Revenue Secretary and the Registrar of High Court and A. I. G. of Police, recommended the abolition of Barnala, Kandaghat and Kapurthala districts and six tehsils. See *The Tribune*, 17 July, 1953.
103. *The Tribune*, 17 July 1953 and see also Pepsu Sarkar, *Pepsu Vich Pardhan Raj (Punjabi)* (Patiala, 1953), pp. 20-22.
104. Gazette Notification No. 131/11 dated 19 June, 1950, Punjab State Archives.
105. *The Tribune*, 17 July 1953 and Pepsu Sarkar, *op.cit.*, p. 25.
106. Dr. K. N. Katju's (Home Minister) statement in Council of States. *The Tribune*, 15 September, 1953. *Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)*, Delhi, 15 Sept., 1953. The per capita cost of administration in Pepsu was the second highest in the whole of India. The pay bill amounted to 59% of the total revenue.
107. "Pepsu's Progress under President's Rule", *The Hindustrn Times*, 15 September, 1953.

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vital issue and should, therefore, be left for democratic government scheduled to follow the general elections in the near future."<sup>108</sup>

In Parliament Dr Katju said "on papers the eight districts will continue and their headquarters will also continue, Mr Rau has not violated this assurance. He has only grouped together some of the smaller units and placed them under a common set of senior officials. Both Barnala and Sangrur for example, continue to be districts but owing to their smallness they will now be administered by one Deputy Commissioner."<sup>109</sup> Most of the district headquarter town did not have sufficient accommodation for offices and the staff. Some of the tehsils were without treasuries.

Consequent upon the conversion of three districts of Pepsu-Kandaghat, Fatehgarh Sahib and Barnala—into sub-divisions, the State Government transferred all revenue record from Kandaghat and Fatehgarh Sahib to Patiala and that of Barnala to Sangrur.<sup>110</sup> The State Government converted the District Treasury offices at Fatehgarh Sahib (Bassi) and Barnala into sub-Treasury offices. The sub-Treasury offices at Payal, Amloh, Phul, Dhuri and Sunam were abolished.<sup>111</sup> Under Section 5 of the Punjab Land Revenue Act, the President ordered the abolition of Payal tehsil and the conversion of Amloh as sub-tehsil.<sup>112</sup> Dhuri tehsil was abolished and its area went to Barnala. A new sub-division comprising Barnala tehsil and Dhuri sub-tehsil with headquarters at Narnaul was formed.<sup>113</sup> Another sub-division comprising Jind and Narwana tehsils

108. S. N. Khosla's (General Secretary of National Front) statement, *The Tribune of India*, 23 June, 1953; *The Tribune*, 21 June, 1953.

109. *The Statesman*, 5 Sept. 1953; *The Tribune*, 2 Sept., 1953.

110. *The Times of India*, 7 Sept. 1953. Barnala District comprised what used to be the State of Malerkotla and parts of Patiala and Nabha States. Furthermore, it received the town of Bagrian and 40 villages as a result of the exchange of enclaves after the formation of Pepsu, See "Barnala Shorn of Districts Glory", *The Hindustan Times*, 9 Oct., 1953.

111. *Ibid* ; *The Ranjit* (Punjabi), Patiala, 6 Sept., 1953. Now Kandaghat tehsil comprised the tehsil of Kandaghat and Nalagarh and the Fatehgarh Sahib subdivision comprised Sirhind and Rajpura tehsils. The Deputy Commissioner of Barnala was designated as Additional Deputy Commissioner of Barnala and as a result of abolition of Kandaghat and Fatehgarh Sahib districts, the Additional Deputy Commissioner in these two districts were designated subdivisional Officers. See *The Times of India*, 1 Sept., 1953.

112. 'Cut in Number of Pepsu Districts'—Notification by President, *The Times of India*, 1 Sept., 1953.

113. *The Hindustan Standard*, 18 August, 1953.

was formed with headquarters at Jind.<sup>114</sup> The tehsils of Phul and the sub-tehsils of Jaitu and Dera Bassi were abolished.<sup>115</sup>

#### IV

Rau on his taking over to Patiala pressed all his efforts to purge the administration of the 'hang-over' of the separately administered eight states. "The tax-payers in Pepsu, according to him, could not afford to go on paying money for retaining untrained, ignorant and inefficient employees of the erstwhile states of this Union, who were not always employed by the rulers for the consideration of efficiency and necessary training."<sup>116</sup> It was also suggested that all political appointments which were made during the regime of the "popular ministers" should be cancelled. There were number of instances to quote to show how power came to be used and abused. A Patwari who had access to a minister was promoted to the post of a *tehsildar* even without training and qualifications. Relatives of some ministers were appointed as *tehsildars* without being recruited through the proper channels.<sup>117</sup> The removal of a nephew of Bhupinder Singh Mann who while a student was appointed Executive Officer of the Phagwara Municipal Committee was welcomed by the people.<sup>118</sup>

The free issue of permits became a scandal which would have besmirched the fair name of any ministry in any state. Distant relations of ministers pitchforked at the Secretariat desk started bullying their subordinates.<sup>119</sup> The official machinery was largely in tune with Rarewala who had symbolized the Maharaja's rule and dispensed patronage. In fact one of the basic troubles in Pepsu was official machinery which was feudal in its character and role. With a view to curtailing all avoidable expenditure an economy drive was launched. As a result of this drive the following economies were effected :

- (a) On account of reorganisation of districts as discussed above.
- (b) On account of reorganisation of the Secretariat—the strength of the various Secretariat Department was fixed, a Central Registry Branch was set up and the accounts and service records which were hitherto

114. *Ibid.*

115. "Beginning of New Era in Pepsu", *The Tribune*, 17 Aug., 1953.

116. *The Tribune*, 3 July, 1953.

117. 'Pepsu Newsletter', *The Times of India*, 6 July, 1953.

118. Insaf "Round the States", *The Hindustan Times*, 10 May, 1953.

119. *Ibid.*

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maintained separately in the various departments of the Secretariat was centralised. A sum of Rs. 1.49 lac was saved.

- (c) On account of reorganisation of other departments of the State the Department of Civil Supplies was abolished, the Directorate of Information, Rajpramukh's Secretariat, P.W.D., Directorate of Rehabilitation, Excise Department, Punjabi Department, Home Guards and Department of Survey, Settlement, Land Records and Consolidation were reorganised.<sup>1-0</sup>

Seven hundred and nineteen Pepsu State employees were retrenched during the first six months of the President's Rule.<sup>121</sup>

Immediately after the Adviser assumed charge of the administration, action was taken against 20 officers and majority of them were Sikhs. They were given inferior work to do while their juniors were promoted to their places.<sup>122</sup> The Adviser functioned on a political level and behaved

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120. *President's Rule in Pepsu, op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

121. This information was given by Dr Katju in the Parliament in reply to a question by Ajit Singh. See *The Hindustan Standard*, 18 September, 1953.

122. For details see PNF, Patiala ; *op. cit.*, pp. 19-29. Sodhi Jai Dev Singh, Chief Secretary was appointed Financial Commissioner vide G. No. 78D. 12-3-53. Lal Singh, Revenue Secretary was appointed as Officer on Special Duty. Prem Kumar, a Junior officer was appointed as D. C. Kohistan; Prem Sarup a junior officer appointed as Director, Local Bodies, vide No. 780 datrd 28-5-53. Amar Nath a junior officer was appointed as Director Civil Supplies vide No. N-No. 78 D and 270 dated 11-7-53 whereas Mangal Singh who was Secretary to Adviser was sent on forced leave vide order No. 78-D. 12-3-53. R.S. Randhawa who had done a commendable job as Development Commissioner was appointed as Law Secretary vide No. 78-D. 12-3-53. Gobinder Singh Custodian was also made to change his position vide No. 78 D. 12-3-53. Rajwant Singh the Director Local Bodies was demoted and made Land Acquisition Officer in P.W.D. vide No. 78 D. 12-3-53. Baldev Singh D.C. Kandaghat was demoted to be Assistant Commissioner, Patiala vide a Notification No. 102 dated 24-3-53. Mohinder Singh A.S.P. was reverted as Inspector, Gurcharan Singh Publicity Officer was reverted as Editor "Kheti Bari" Magazine, Harpal Singh, S.P. was reverted as D.S.P. vide No. 273. Sampuran Singh, Director, Civil Supplies, Sant Partap Singh, D.C., Patiala, Baldev Singh, D.C. Kandaghat, Mangal Singh, Secretary to Adviser, Wazir Singh Jeji D.C. Fatehgarh Sahib were sent on forced leave vide G.A. 78 D. 12-3-53. Services of Rajwant Singh, Superintendent, Legislative Assembly, Rajinder Paul Singh, Private Secretary to the Speaker, Sukhdev Singh Sodhi, District Session Judge, Major Gurjit Singh, Motor Transport Controller, Harnam Singh, Director Education were terminated.

as a representative of the ruling party at the centre. This created a partisan spirit in the administration.

The other achievement of the President's rule was rectifying the faults of departmentalism and extreme centralisation of the Pepsu administration, which was a legacy from the past. The integration of the P.U.A.S. (Executive) and P.U.J.S. (Judicial) services was finalised. The scheme for a joint cadre of the administrative and police services of Punjab and Pepsu was approved. A total saving of about Rs. 20 lac per annum was effected by the economy drive launched by the Adviser.<sup>123</sup> Still the per capita cost of administration in Pepsu remained the second highest in the whole of India. The pay bill amounted to Rs. 3 crores, nearly 59 percent of the total revenue.<sup>124</sup>

Complaints of corruption against field staff officers were numerous. Rau took action in some of the cases and the officials were dismissed or even convicted. The Agriculture Department was reorganised and a gazetted officer 'District Agriculture Officer' was posted in every district. The work load of the P.W.D. which was Rs. 86 lac in the year 1949 rose to the figure of 3.85 crores in 1953. In the year 1948 there were 9 divisions<sup>125</sup> with 29 sub-divisions, but by 1953 they rose to 16 and 55 respectively. The works Department was reorganised to meet the growing needs. In order to handle municipal and local works expeditiously a survey and construction division was created.<sup>126</sup> Owing largely to the inadequacy of building accommodation in Patiala, both offices and residences of many offices of Heads of Department, Superintending Engineers and some Executive Engineers had to be located elsewhere than in Patiala. Thus for instance the offices of the Director of Public Instructions, Conservator of Forests and Director of Agriculture were all situated in Nabha. With the construction of the New Rajendra Hospital the old hospital building was made available to house some of the offices.<sup>127</sup>

Steps in the direction of modernization and improving of financial administration were taken. Financial codes and rules were revised. Under these rules Government servants became entitled to higher pensions and that families of deceased government servants became entitled to pensions and gratuities. The account of the Police Department were

123. *The Tribune* 17 Feb., 1954.

124. *The Hindustan Times*, 15 September, 1953.

125. *President's Rule in Pepsu, March, 1953 to March, 1954, op.cit.*, pp. 10-11.

126. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12; *The Tribune*, 17 October, 1953.

127. *Ibid.*

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ordered to be maintained in accordance with the requirements of the Punjab Police Rules.<sup>128</sup>

To ensure speedy despatch of public business a measure of decentralisation was introduced, the financial powers of Deputy Commissioners and Heads of Departments were enlarged.<sup>129</sup> In order to provide better amenities, such as roads, water supply, lighting, etc., in Municipal and Small Town Committee areas, a committee was appointed to investigate the possibility of improving their financial resources.<sup>130</sup>

Bhatinda district was the largest district in Pepsu, yet there was no office or residential accommodation for officers with the result that the headquarters of the district had to be shifted to Faridkot where buildings were available. This arrangement proved to be inconvenient. Rau, therefore, decided to construct a Civil Station in Bhatinda. A project costing Rs. 33 lac<sup>131</sup> was prepared and the construction started in September 1953. Besides offices for the Deputy Commissioner and his staff, the Session Judge and Tehsildars, Civil Surgeon, Executive Engineer etc., a new district jail and police lines to accommodate the district police and the residential houses for several officers and clerical staffs were provided at the Bhatinda Civil Station.<sup>132</sup>

128. *Ibid.*

129. *Ibid.*, p. 12-13. Over centralization of the administration was a legacy from the past: when the rulers kept the reins of administration in his own hands. It probably also suited the Ministers but was entirely out of tune with the spirit and requirements of a democratic set up. The main disadvantage of this system was that the Deputy Commissioner did not or could not fill the role he was expected to fill. He was so used "not to exercising even his statutory functions that in most cases he willingly took a back seat and the Secretariat modestly, but not so reluctantly, assumed his powers and ran his district for him. See *President's Rule in Pepsu, op. cit.*, p. 61.

130. *The Hindustan Times*, 31 October, 1954; *The Statesman*, 12 March, 1954. Bhatinda's new Civil Station formerly opened by Lal Bahadur Shastri was described as one of the biggest public works projects in Pepsu.

131. The allocation of the amount was raised to Rs. 45.92 lacs. See also *The Hindustan Times*, 31 October 1954. Rau was convinced on his very first visit to Bhatinda district that this "notoriously bad district" could not be controlled from Faridkot. Immediate decision was followed by quick estimates and simultaneous sanction. See *The Tribune*, 23 September, 1953; *The Hindustan Times*, 27 October, 1953.

132. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-20. With a simple ceremony at "Mile Zero" in the Bhatinda-Goniana and Bhatinda-Damdama Sahib roads the work was announced to have commenced on 22 September, 1953. See *The Statesman*, 23 September, 1953.

Experienced Executive Officers replaced their inexperienced predecessors in nine of the larger municipalities. Although the Punjab Municipal Act, which gave considerable powers of supervision and control to district officers, yet in actual practice these officers did not pull their weight and all power was concentrated in the Secretariat, with the result that delays and inefficiency were rife. Orders were issued restoring to the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner the position given to them by the law they were exhorted to take personal interest in municipal administration. The Patiala Municipality was suspended for inefficiency.<sup>133</sup>

Before the advent of President's rule, large amounts of land revenue, water rate, punitive police tax and other Governments dues remained unpaid—more particularly in the occupancy tenants. The tenants offered organised Biswedari villages where land was held by resistance even to the execution of rental decrees. Rau visited some of these villages. As a result the non-cooperative and non-paying tendency of the defaulters gradually broke down. Out of the total net recoverable arrears of Rs. 34 lacs outstanding on the 1st of March, 1953, less than Rs. 40,000 remained unpaid on the 1st of February, 1954.<sup>134</sup> The *kists* (instalments) for *khariif* 1952 and *rabi* 1953 which fell due in 1953 totalling Rs. 85.2 lac was realised in full. Similarly, all but Rs. 2 lac of the old arrears of water rate amounting to Rs. 17 lakh was paid up.<sup>135</sup> As regards the arrears of the punitive police tax of Rs. 2 lac ; less than Rs. 20,000 remained unrecovered. In all a sum of Rs. 1.30 crore was recovered during the tenure of the President's rule.<sup>136</sup>

There was a big legislative vacuum in Pepsu. The President's rule being of a temporary character, the Government was reluctant to legislate except where legislation was more or less unavoidable. Twelve Acts were passed by the President in exercise of the powers conferred on him by the Pepsu Legislative (Delegation of Powers) Act, 1953 which included the Pepsu Police (Incitement to Disaffection) Act, 1953 Pepsu Abolition of Malkiyat Rights Act, 1953, Pepsu Occupancy Tenants Act, Pepsu Land Acquisition Act, 1953, Pepsu Evacuee Interest (Separation) Act 1953, Pepsu Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, Pepsu Betterment Charges and Average Rates Act, etc. Apart from these relating to agrarian reforms, the measures enacted aimed at the stabilisation of the conditions of law

133. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

134. *President's Rule in Pepsu, op. cit.*, p. 34.

135. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

136. *Ibid.*

and order, removal of certain constitutional defects in the existing legislation, giving effect to commitments and implementation of Five Year Plan.

The agrarian problem in Pepsu was not a new problem; it was a legacy of the past.<sup>137</sup> When the President took over the administration, the agrarian problem had already taken a serious turn. The following three bills were drafted :

- (i) The Pepsu Abolition of Ala Malkiyat Rights Bill, 1953.
- (ii) The Pepsu Occupancy Tenants (Vesting of Proprietary Rights) Bill, 1953.
- (iii) The Pepsu Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Bill, 1953.

The Government of India took sometime to obtain the advise of experts of the Planning Commission and the ministries concerned. The Bills were promulgated as President's Acts, two on the 18th of August, 1953 and the third on 6th December 1953. The Pepsu Abolition of Ala Malkiyat Rights Act, 1953 as given out was to extinguish Ala-Malkiyat rights and to raise the inferior proprietors to the status of full proprietors in about 36000 acres.<sup>138</sup> By virtue of the Pepsu Occupancy Tenants (Vesting of Proprietary Rights) Act 1953 occupancy tenants became full proprietors over the area of about three lac acres.<sup>139</sup> The third Act, viz. the Pepsu Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act, 1953 was by far the most important of the three. It aimed at raising as many tenants-at-will as possible to the status of full proprietors. The permissible limit for personal cultivation was fixed at one-half of the area owned by a land-owner subject to a maximum of 30 'standard' acres and subject to a minimum of 10 'standard' acres.<sup>140</sup> In additton, the Act gave the tenants the option to buy the land under their occupancy on payment in six yearly instalment of compensation of 90 times the land revenue which seldom or never increased the annual rent that used to be paid by the tenants.<sup>141</sup>

On the application of it was found that this Act was retrograde. It did not apply to lands already partitioned forcibly under the 1947 Farman and Ordinance of 1949. It did not solve what was called by the Venkatachar Committee as the 'hard core' of the poble and seek to

137. *Ibid.*

138. *President's Rule in Pepsu, op. cit.*, p. 5.

139. *Ibid.*

140. *Ibid.*; Pepsu Government, *Pepsu Mein Pardhan Raj* (Urdu) (Patiala, 1953), p. 15.

141. *The Tribune*, 17 Feb., 1954.



perpetuate the age-old injustice done by rulers in making the peasant proprietors tenants.<sup>142</sup> The compensation envisaged was higher than that recommended in the draft bill of the United Front Government. The insistence on payment of rent arrears together with compensation was contrary to the recommendations of the Venkatachar Committee and Dara Singh Committee which wanted all arrears to be wiped out.<sup>143</sup> N. Prasada Rao, General Secretary of the All India Kisan Sabha, said that the Adviser's regime which was nothing but a caretaker government had no legal or moral authority to pass such laws in contravention of the recommendations of the previous committees and the Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly.<sup>144</sup>

## V

Prior to the imposition of President's rule, the Pepsu Government was a government with a fluid majority in the legislature and represented a marriage of convenience among parties and individuals with few common programmes and policies. Further it was also admitted in many quarters<sup>145</sup> that the Pepsu ministry was corrupt and incapable of maintaining law and order in the State. As such, the Central intervention was welcomed by the press. But still on the suspension of the constitution in the State Dr Ambedkar, the very architect of Presidential rule, regretted having incorporated this "reactionary" instrument in the constitution. Speaking in the Rajya Sabha, on Presidential rule against the United Front Government of Pepsu, he characterized the action of the Central Government as the "most violent kind of rape on the constitution."<sup>146</sup> The move commended itself for one (and only one) good reason, there was no alternative to it. In fact plausible alternative to the imposition of the President's rule were carefully, frittered away to make it a "fait accompli." Even afterwards no one in authority produced a convincing argument as to why elections could not be held in the state after the first six months of Rau's rule. This seems to be the price of the political parties had to pay for two assurances—one positive and the other

142. Venkatachar Committee and Dara Singh Committee were constituted to go into the details of the peasant problems in Pepsu in 1952.

143. *The Hindustan Standard*, 17 May, 1953.

144. *Ibid.*

145. Gian Singh Rarewala himself admitted later that he had to bribe his own partymen to support him in the legislative. For Rarewala's statement, see *The Times of India*, 24 April, 1953.

146. B.R. Ambedkar in *The Times of India*, 15 September, 1953,

negative—from the centre. The positive promise was about the holding of elections as early as possible and the negative one concerned the disciplining of the State Congress Party to ensure that there were no furtive and over attempts to form a coalition government of sorts. Delhi scuttled all plans of the National United Front to form opportunistic alliances which could have put the party in power. The Congress party's allergy to early election was well founded. The personalised rule from the secretariat for all its ruthless efficiency and effectiveness in spurcing up the administrative machinery had ruffled a lot of political feathers. To a certain extent Rau's activism can be justified by the lapse of the defector Government of Rarewala. But it may be said that efficient administration and the launching of development programmes were no arguments for the substitution of democratic government by the rule of the President.

The Pepsu situation as such was, before the imposition of President rule was compareable to many states. The law and order conditions prevailed in other states as named above was not quite different. The nullification of Rarewala's election which gave rise to the ticklish problem was handled by the centre in an unconstitutional and undemocratic way. The suspension of the constitution was not legal. It had been given in the constitution that if a minister was unseated as a result of election petition, he might continue as a minister provided he got himself re-elected in a by-election within a time period of six months. Rarewala was denied this privilege whereas Morarji Desai (Bombay) could be made a minister after he was defeated in the election by popular vote. The unseating of a Chief Minister did not mean that the government had been defeated. The majority party should have been given a chance to elect a new leader and form a Cabinet. If the constitution was to be suspended, the head of the State should have been made the Administrator. When the constitution was suspended in Punjab, the Governor carried on government in the name of President.

In September 1953 when the Travancore-Cochin Assembly was dissolved, the then dissolved ministry was allowed to function as a caretaker ministry till the reconstruction of the House.<sup>147</sup> Similar arrangement

147. During the tenure of A.J. John (1952-54), Chief Minister of Kerala—Kerala State Assembly was dissolved in September 1953 but no Presidential rule was imposed. See B.D. Dua, *op. cit.*, Table 3.11, p. 130 and pp. 119-20. On June 7, 1953 John issued a "merger or quit" ultimatum to the Travancore Tamilnad Congress (TTNC). The immediate reason for the show down with the TTNC was, as *The Times of India* reported, "The continued refusal of the latter party to merge with the Congress." See *The Times of India*, 8 June, 1953.

was not made in Pepsu where both the legislature and the ministry were swept away by a sudden proclamation.

During the Rau's regime it manoeuvred by the State Congress units to fragment and absorb the opposition parties and groups. The State Congress appointed its adviser and Congress leaders such as S.N. Aggarwal, Deb Kant Barooah etc., visited Pepsu and tried to create new enthusiasm to this direction.<sup>148</sup> Previous to this the Congress party had lost its reputation in Pepsu because some of its members followed the policy of opportunism. The Centre, through a careful use of its resources had very subtly abetted the manoeuvres of the State Congress to rebuild its image. Since this pressure to fragment the opposition had a one-way flow because of the dominance of the Congress at the Centre. The concept of "Congressization" came very close to reality. There was no denying the fact that the other political parties were for the most part in no position to compete with the massive Congress machinery, but the manner in which the Congress Party, both in the Union and at the Centre, tried to fragment them with a view to undercutting their strength and stifling their growth, made it look as if the Congress never learnt to be a party among other parties. In fact the Congress at the Centre was keen to help its state unit to establish themselves well, in order to govern the Union after the election. During this period, the mores and modes of behaviour of the Congress were set. The monopoly to represent the peoples' interests became an integrated preception of its leaders as per the indoctrine of their leadership at the centre. Even in 1953, Nehru had said, "The Congress is the country and the country is the Congress."<sup>149</sup>

The fact of the matter was that the suspension of the constitution in Pepsu indicated the hostile attitude of the Congress centre towards the regional parties in the Union. Contrary to the promises held out that Presidential rule would be the last of the instruments the Centre would use against a recalcitrant state.<sup>150</sup> Presidential rule, instead, in this case (as well as in other number of cases in other states afterwards)

148. *The Tribune*, 29 September, 1953.

149. Nehru in W.H. Morris-Jones, *The Government and Politics of India* (London, 1967), p. 91.

150. Dr Ambedkar assured the Assembly that the Article 356 would be used only as a last resort against a recalcitrant state. Normally, the President would first issue a warning to the state concerned and if it was not heeded, he would then order an election to allow the people of the state to settle the matter themselves. It would only be after these steps had failed that the President would be justified to intervene. See B.D. Dua, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

#### A YEAR OF PREEDENT RULE IN PEPSU

turned out to be a partisan instrument to maintain and sustain the hegemonic position of the Congress Party or say in other words to usher an era of "Congress raj of constitutional dictatorship."

Rau's Government duly earned its quote of achievements on the law and order front. The claim that the tenure of the Rau's one year regime was the year of achievement and was as exaggerated as its detractor's charge that it was a year 'wasted'. The truth lied somewhere between these two views. The law and order situation in Pepsu improved a lot and elections were held in 1954 in peaceful atmosphere. Immediately after assuming the charge he had addressed himself to the problem of putting the administrative machinery on the right lines. There were merits in his claim as contained in a brochure brought out by the public Relations Department to mark the end of President rule that the problems had been "tackled with a resolute move on a war footing with the active assistance of the Centre."

Major gangs of dacoits were busted. The morale of the police became high. It was for the first time the dacoits were in face to face with the might of the State. But one of the failures of the Rau's Government was on the socio-political front. The gulf between the Sikhs and Hindus if anything had widened. The political parties became bolder in propogating divisive ideology, which afterwards gave rise to fundamentalist forces. In the whole process the Rau's administration could have been able to win the heart of State Congress only. The other political parties looked upon the administration; as biased against them. Efficient administration and the launching of development programmes were (are) no arguments for the substitution of democratic government by rule from the Centre.

## Development of Wazirabad under Avitabile (1829-1836)

DEVINDER KUMAR VERMA\*

Avitabile was, an Italian, civil officer in the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He joined Lahore *Darbar* in 1826 and was initially given charge of infantry and became a distinguished officer.<sup>1</sup> He was conferred with the rank of General.<sup>2</sup> Realising Wazirabad's importance from commercial point of view the Maharaja in 1829, appointed Avitabile as the Governor of the town and adjoining territories on the recommendation of Ventura.<sup>3</sup>

Wazirabad town is about three hundred and fifty four years old. It is said that it was founded in 1635-36 during the reign of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, by one of his *amirs* named Wazir Khan<sup>4</sup> (Hakim Ilmu-ud-Din). It is situated on the right bank of river Chenab between 32° 26'N and 74°E.<sup>5</sup> It is twenty one miles north-west of Gujranwala town. It was formed out of Sodhra and Sialkot. Being situated on trade route it became an important town during the reign of Muhammad Shah in the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

Sardar Charhat Singh, grand father of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, had been imbued with the plan of creating a state for himself. He drove away the Muslim ruler of Wazirabad and placed it under his control in about 1760 and appointed his brother-in-law Budh Singh as its *thanedar*

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\*Lecturer, Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.

1. Leopold Von Orlich, *Travels in India including Sinde and Punjab*, London, 1846, pp. 167-68; Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Lahore, 1888, p. 385; Pearse (ed.), *Soldier and Traveller, Memoirs of Alexander Gardner*, London, 1898, p. 212; Edwardes Grey and H. L. O., Garrett (eds.), *European Adventures in Northern India, 1785-1849*, Lahore, 1929, p. 124.
2. Leopold Von Orlich, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-78.
3. Wolff, *The Travels and Adventures of Joseph Wolff*, London, 1861, pp. 125-29; Edwardes and Garrett, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-29; Prem Singh Hoti, *Khalsa Raj de Badeshi Karinde*, Lahore, 1945, pp. 52-53.
4. *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. XXIV, Oxford, 1908, p. 388.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Ganesh Das Badhera, *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab* (1855), ed. Kirpal Singh, Amritsar, 1965, p. 250.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF WAZIRABAD UNDER AVITABILE (1829-1836)

or administrator.<sup>7</sup> Sohan Lal Suri writes that Sardar Charhat Singh appointed two or three hundred gunmen to protect the city of Wazirabad.<sup>8</sup> Mahan Singh, son of Charhat Singh, conquered the surrounding territories of Wazirabad, which was a base camp for him.

Jodh Singh, the ruler of Wazirabad, died in November 1809. Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed the former ruler's son Ganda Singh as the successor of his father. In June 1810 there were riots between Ganda Singh and his relatives.<sup>9</sup> The Maharaja ordered Faqir Aziz-ud-Din, the administrator of Gujrat, to go and occupy Wazirabad.<sup>10</sup> Ganda Singh was relieved of his charge and was given a reasonable *jagir* for his subsistence. Sardar Ganda Singh Safi and Lala Khushab Ram were appointed to look after the city. It is said that a small amount was given to Lahori *bhagats* to build Lanka at Wazirabad.<sup>11</sup>

The Maharaja realising his capacity and astuteness considered Avitabile for administrating Wazirabad. Avitabile, "indeed a unique person in the settlement of the affairs of the country which had certainly prospered under him." Commenting upon the civil efficiency and geniusness of Avitabile Herbert Edwardes writes, "Avitabile though professionally a soldier, had all the genius for civil government of Thomas Munro or Henry Lawrence, though entirely destitute of their philanthropy and Christian springs of action."<sup>12</sup> He became a distinguished civil officer in the service of Lahore *Darbar*.

He improved the face of the town considerably.<sup>13</sup> In 1831, just after two years of Avitabile in Wazirabad, Wolff, a contemporary traveller, while passing through this city observed, "he (Avitabile) had most remarkably improved the town, he had kept the streets of the city clean and had got a beautiful carriage made and a fine palace built for himself."<sup>14</sup> Wolff further states, "this ingenious man has made this the finest town in the Punjab, and added to it a new town with a gate to which he has given the name of 'Ram Katra,' the quarter of God."<sup>15</sup>

7. Mohamad Latif, *History of Punjab*, Calcutta, 1890, p. 339.

8. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, *Daftar II*, Punjabi tr. by Amarwant Singh, G.N.D.U., Amritsar, p. 5.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 390

12. Herbert Edwardes, *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence*, London, 1872, pp. 292-94.

13. Ganesh Das Badhera, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

14. Wolff, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 372,

15. *Ibid.*

In point of architecture Wazirabad may take precedence over other town in the Punjab for which the credit goes to Avitabile who spent much of his accumulated wealth in decorating and improving the locality of his residence.<sup>16</sup> The streets were broad and bazars exceedingly commodious.<sup>17</sup>

According to H. R. Gupta, "Avitabile introduced European Four-in-Hand style of architecture in Punjab. At Wazirabad he demolished the old bazar and rebuilt the town. He made the streets wide enough to admit a Four-in-Hand."<sup>18</sup>

Wazirabad was known for its gardens. Ganesh Das Badhera has given a comprehensive account of the gardens in his work. He writes, "in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh many eminent persons laid out orchards and gardens outside the city. The garden of Kirpa Ram Chopra adjoining the city is well known. The garden of Diwan Thakur Das Chopra, who served Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu, is also beautiful. Similarly the gardens of Kishan Kaur, Lorindi Shah Arora, Jamadar Khushal Singh and Uttam Singh Chhachi are in a flourishing state. The *sarai* of Wazirabad is a beautiful place. It has a pleasing garden and a high tower."<sup>19</sup>

In the words of Captain Havelock, "his (Avitabile's) reputation as an excellent governor had been fully established in the Punjab and had reached India whilst he was in charge of the town and surrounding country of Wazirabad."<sup>20</sup>

Sohan Lal Suri tells us that when Maharaja Ranjit Singh visited Wazirabad on March 20, 1835, "he was greatly pleased with the style of the newly constructed buildings. He appreciated the work of the glorious sahib (Avitabile)."<sup>21</sup>

During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Wazirabad was one of the important trade centres on the bank of river Chenab. The Chenab was navigable from its confluence with Jhelum to Akhnoor in Jammu territory about fifty miles above Wazirabad. A considerable trade was carried on both up and down the stream, timber from the Jammu Hills,

16. Steinbach, *The Punjaub* (1846), Patiala, 1970, pp. 5-6.

17. *Ibid.*

18. H.R. Gupta, "Buildings and Gardens of Maharaja Ranjit Singh," *Proceedings of the Punjab History Conference*, 15th Session, March 1981, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 136.

19. Ganesh Das Badhera, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

20. Captain Havelock, *History of the War in Afghanistan in 1838-39*, Vol. II, London, 1840, p. 195.

21. Sohan Lal Suri, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

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sugar, *ghee*, wheat, coarse cotton cloth, hides and dry skins of sheep and goats were sent down stream to Multan where from they were taken to Kabul via Dera Ghazi Khan.<sup>22</sup>

Wazirabad was also known for cotton industry. It was mostly inhabited by Khatis. Most of the Khatis of the town wove large quantity of coarse cloth and exported it to the neighbouring places. Tents, *kanats* and *sholdairs* were particularly prepared at this place. The silk and chenille were also manufactured there.

The smiths of the town have a reputation for the manufacture of small articles of cutlery.<sup>23</sup>

There were few *karkhanas* at Wazirabad which manufactured weapons. It was also a centre for boat manufacturing.<sup>24</sup>

Reynell Taylor, one of the officers deputed by the British Government to settle the Punjab between the two Anglo-Sikh wars, records that 'since Avitabile had left the place Wazirabad had greatly decayed, and the shopkeepers sincerely remembered the day of Avitabile's wise and vigorous management.'<sup>25</sup>

After the annexation of the Punjab, the remodelled city (Wazirabad) was so much liked by the British that it was made the district headquarter which includes the present districts of Sialkot, Gujranwala together with parts of Gurdaspur and Lahore districts. In 1852, however, it lapsed to its present position and became sub-district headquarter of district Gujranwala. Thus before Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule it was a insignificant town and before the annexation of the Punjab by the Britishers (under Avitabile) it had risen to be one of the most important centres of the land of five rivers.<sup>26</sup>

22. F.C. Arora, *Commerce by Rivers in the Punjab*, Punjab Govt., p. 93.

23. *Imperial Gazetteer*, XXIV, p. 378.

24. F.C. Arora, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

25. Devinder Kumar Verma, "Foreigners at the Court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh," M. Phil. dissertation, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1983, p. 47.

26. *Gujranwala District Gazetteer*, pp. 343-46.



# An Analysis of the Contemporary Durrani Revenue Documents and Correspondence Pertaining to the Patiala Chieftainship (Zamindari) during the Later Half of the 18th Century

B. R. GROVER\*

## I

Inherited from the erstwhile Patiala State, the Punjab State Archives, Patiala has preserved the revenue documents (in Persian) of the Durrani rule in *chakla* Sirhind (cis-Satlej territories) relating to the periods of Raja Ala Singh and Raja Amar Singh. Mostly ignored by the historians hitherto,<sup>1</sup> these documents throw much light on the working of some of the

\*Director ICHR (Retd.), New Delhi.

1. The only administrator, scholar who has briefly referred to two of these documents in a general manner (supra nos. 2 and 17) for the narration of political history of Patiala was Khalifa Sayyid Muhammad Hasan (Prime-Minister of Patiala State) in his work entitled *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, Safir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1878 (henceforth *Tarikh-i-Patiala*), pp. 56-57, 66. However, he did not appreciate the official status and differential territorial jurisdictions of Ala Singh as chief zamindar and as *jagirdar*. In fact, he has not analysed any of the documents for the purposes of the description of the Durrani administrative-cum-agrarian set-up in *chakla* Sirhind. Thereafter Diwan Bahadur Sir Daya Kishan Kaul (Chief Secretary, Patiala State), in his paper on 'Care and Preservation of Old Records in Northern India' vide I.C.H.R., Vol. II, January, 1920 (Lahore Session), pp. 31-39 noted that in Patiala there were six documents which dated back to the time of Ahmad Shah Abdali and were still wrapped upon in the original narrow envelopes bearing the addresses only. He further remarked that, "They have been kept just as they were received, and there is absolutely no indication as to whether they were replied to or entered on a register: one is ignorant even of the exact date on which they came to hand." In fact, Kaul did not dwell on any of the contents contained in the documents. It can only be surmised that the documents referred to by Kaul are perhaps the same which are being analysed in this paper. Kaul also did not note the separate existence of the letters written by Raja Ala Singh and Maharaja Amar Singh to Ahmad Shah Abdali. Ganda Singh vide *Ahmad Shah Durrani, Father of Modern Afghanistan*, Bombay, 1959 (Bibliography, pp. 415-440) and Kirpal Singh vide *Maharaja Ala Singh of Patiala and His Times*, Amritsar, 1954 have not been referred to any of the documents under analysis.

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aspects of the land revenue administration of the Durrani in the cis-Satlej territories which had been formally ceded by the Mughal State to Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1757 AD. The documents comprise three *taliqachas* (Orders) dated 1761 AD from the Durrani *Wazir-i-Mumalik* (Prime Minister) to the named revenue administrators of *chakla* Sirhind underlining the nature of *chaudurie-zamindari*, *faujdari* and *jagir* assignments to Ala Singh Jat in specified villages and *parganas*, two *sanads* dated 1764 AD issued by a Durrani official conferring the powers of *naib-faujdar*/*faujdar* on Ala Singh Jat in two *parganas* as well as entrusting him with the collection of the revenues therein on the payment of stipulated amount to the Durrani Government, one document with two seals of the Durrani official dated 1765AD as a receipt given to Ala Singh for the mentioned amount of the revenues (*muamalat*) received from the latter. Apart from the above mentioned documents, there is Timur Shah's *Farman* dated 5 August, 1778 AD addressed to Maharaja Amar Singh and Timur Shah's *murasala* (communication) dated 5 August, 1778 addressed to Chauhar Singh Phul confirming them in their respective territorial possessions and the functions to be performed by them as per instructions.

In addition to the above collection of documents, there is a compilation comprising copies of seven *arzashts* (Letters of obeisance), dated 1764-65 AD of which two were written by Raja Ala Singh and five by Raja Amar Singh to Shah Wali Khan, *wazir* of Ahmad Shah Abdali. Apart from the revenue and administrative matters, these *arzashts* cover the contemporary political and military affairs.

The above documents are of great significance for the analysis of the agrarian pattern of *chakla* Sirhind under the Durrani rule. They equally underline the elements of continuity between the Mughal agrarian system and the Durrani set-up. The veracity of the contents of the above documents is as well corroborated by the contemporary Persian *Akhbarat* (News Letters) and other sources. These documents have been translated in extenso so as to dispel all doubts about the contemporary situation as well as to have an authentic analysis of the nature of the Durrani rule in these territories during the second half of the 18th century.

## II

### Translation

(i) A copy of *taliqacha* (Order) dated 22 *Shaban* AH 1174/29 March 1761 AD (bearing the seal of the *Qazi* dated AH 1162/1749-50 AD)

issued by *Wazir-i-Azam* (Prime Minister, Nawab Shah Wali Khan) to Faiz Talab Khan Durrani, *subadar* and in charge of the revenues (*sahib-i-ikhtiyar-i-maliyat*) of *chakla* Sirhind states<sup>2</sup> that as Ala Singh Jat has been appointed in the category of the chief *wakils* holding *jagir* (*ba jagir-i-wukla-i-ali*), the latter may be considered as the chief *wakil* (*wukla-i-ali*). It has been recommended to the royal Court (*Huzur*) that he (Ala Singh) should be given proper respect in this regard. It further enjoins Mirza Muhammad Taqi (*darogha*) and in charge revenue department, *chakla* Sirhind to recognise him with the above mentioned status and conduct the revenue matters relating to Ala Singh's territories in cooperation with his representatives (*wakils*) Ram Singh and Kashmiri Mal. Keeping in view the above mentioned Order (*taliqacha*) and the chief *wakils* holding *jagir*, he (Muhammad Taqi) should prepare the total accounts (*tumar*) of the revenues (of the villages/*parganas* in the jurisdiction of Ala Singh) based upon actual assessment (*tashkhis*) and after having afforded rebate (*takhfit*) and other (customary) dues, etc., to Ala Singh. This may be done in cooperation with the *wakils* of the latter and the total accounts (*tumar*) should be duly attested and stamped by the *qazi*.

The revenue accounts relate to 726 villages (*qarya*) pertaining to the *jagir* assigned in the category of chief *wakils* (*jagir-i-wukla-i-ali*). The number of villages enumerated per *pargana* are: *pargana* Sanam inclusive of *qasba* 224; *pargana* Samana 266; *pargana* *Haveli* Sirhind 52; *pargana* Sanawar 89; *pargana* *qiryat* Rai Samun 4; *pargana* Jehat 8; *pargana* Sangan 17; *pargana* Gharam 6; *Pargana* Sanwar 37; *pargana* Mansurpur 23.

As such, 726 villages may be reckoned as his (Ala Singh's) *jagir* as the chief *wakil* (*jagir-i-wukla-i-ali*) and he (Faiz Talab Khan Durrani, the *subadar*) should not on any account make a claim over them for his own (revenue) jurisdiction as on the recommendation (already) made to the exalted *Huzur* (the Royal Court), these *mahals* have been deleted from his administration and revenue management (*hakumat wa amaldari*)

2. Punjab State Archives, Patiala (henceforth P.S.A., Patiala), Foreign Ministry Case 2A/147 of 1174 A.H.; Sacred Documents pertaining to the reign of Shri 108 Maharaja Baba Ala Singh Surgbashi.

It is regretted that the descriptive docketing of the documents as recorded by P.S.A., Patiala is erroneous and misleading. Moreover, all the documents do not pertain to the year A.H. 1174/1761 A.D.

Document (Doc.) No. 2A/147(B) of 1174 A.H., dated 22 *Shaban* A.H. 1174/29 March, 1761 A.D.

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and assigned to Ala Singh. They (Faiz Talab Khan Durrani and Ala Singh) should regard each other's friend as a friend and each other's enemy as a foe. As such, Ala Singh is enjoined to act accordingly to this understanding and similarly he (Faiz Talab Khan Durrani) should not bear any enmity towards the former as there should be no animosity towards the chief *wakils* (*wukla-i-ali*) and the latter should make necessary earnest efforts for the implementation of the royal order.

(ii) A copy of *taliqacha* (Order dated 22 *Shaban*, AH 1174/29 March, 1761 AD (bearing the seal of the *Qazi* dated AH 1162/1749-50 AD) issued by *Wazir-i-Azam* (Shah Wali Khan, Prime Minister of Ahmad Shah Durrani) and addressed to Mirza Muhammad Taqi who should know<sup>3</sup> that Ala Singh Jat holding the *jagir* as the chief *wakil* in the category of *jagir* of *wukla-i-ali* and having been vested with the powers of *darogha* and revenue administration (*zabt-i-maliya wa taujiat*) is hereby confirmed in his position. He (Muhammad Taqi) along with Ala Singh Jat should undertake the assessment of the revenues (*maliya*) from season to season i.e. crop to crop (*fasl ba fasl—kharif/rabi*) in these (*jagir*) *mahals* and the revenues thus fixed may be deposited in the treasury of *wukla-i-ali* (Ala Singh Jat) after the deduction of his own expenses (for assessment and settlement of the revenues). It is essential that he should extend full cooperation in this regard to Ala Singh Jat. The *chaudharies*, the *qanungos*, etc., and the residents of the territories should recognise the continued and absolute status of the afore-mentioned person i.e. Ala Singh Jat in the above mentioned directions (territories) and should extend complete willing cooperation (to him).

(iii) A copy of a *taliqacha* (order) dated 7 *Shaban* 4th R. Y. AH 1176/12 February, 1763 AD (bearing the seal of the *Qazi* dated AH 1162/1749-50 AD) issued by the *Wazir-i-Azam* (Prime Minister, Nawab Shah Wali Khan) is addressed to Mirza Muhammad Taqi Ansari. *darogha* and revenue in charge (*darogha wa-zabit-i-maliyat*) pertaining to the *mahals* assigned in *jagir* to Ala Singh Jat, the chief *wakil* (*jagir-i-wukla-i-ali*).<sup>4</sup> He (Mirza Muhammad Taqi Ansari) should know that since the four *mahals* i.e. the *parganas* of Sanam, Mansurpur, Gharam and Sanwar have been withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the *subadar* and in-charge finances, *chakla* Sirhind (*subadar sahib-i-ikhtiyar maliyat*) and assigned in *iagir* to Ala Singh Jat (in the category of *jagir-wukla-i-ali*), the revenues

3. *Ibid.*, Doc. No. 2A/147 (A) dated 22 *Shaban* A.H. 1174/29 March 1761 AD.

4. *Ibid.*, Doc. No. 2A(C), dated 7 *Shaban* AH 1174/12 February, 1763 AD.

as well as the cesses comprising the *taujis* of the *parganas* would be assessed by the latter in accordance with the prevalent practice (*dāstur*) and varying settled schedules. Apart from it, (as) some portions (of the above *mahals*) which have been further detached from the *taalluqa* territories of Ala Singh Jat and are under the occupation of various zamindars all such *mahals* have been put under the *faujdari* jurisdiction of Ala Singh Jat who has also been vested with the powers of *darogha* and revenue administration of the *mahals* (*darogha wa zabit-i-mahal—Ala Singh mushiarialah namuda bood*). The latter is enjoined to run the administration in a righteous manner so as to develop the *mahals*, look after the welfare of the *raaya*, to assess and collect the revenues (*maliyat*) as well as the cesses (*abwab ul jama*) in accordance with the established revenue administration in an efficient manner without any deficiency. The zamindars, the *chaudharies*, the *qanungos* and the *raaya* of the above mentioned four *mahals* are directed to recognize Ala Singh Jat as the *faujdar* of all the four *mahals* assigned as *jagir-i-wukla-i-ali* and willingly pay the revenues (*maliyat*) of these *mahals* every season i.e., crop after crop determined judiciously as per accounts to Ala Singh Jat to whom these *mahals* have been entrusted. They should continue to render the statement of the total assessed and realised revenues (*jama hasil*) to him in accordance with the established practice and recognise his above mentioned status.

Issued dated 7 *Sahr Shaban* 4th Regnal Year.

(iv) A Letter of Appointment (*sanad*) issued by Muhammad Ramazan dated 2 *Safar* 5th R.Y. (AH 1178/1 August 1764 AD) bearing the latter's seal confirms the duties and functions (*khidmat*) of *naib faujdar* and *amin* (*nayabat faujdari (wa amanat)* of *parganas* Tohana and Jamalpur (*chakla* Sirhind) on Ala from *Kharif* 1166 *Fasli*/1759 A.D.<sup>5</sup> By virtue of this appointment, Ala Singh is also entitled to the established necessary prerequisites as the (chief) *muqaddam* on behalf of the Government for the discharge of the official duties (in these territories). The *chaudharies*, *qanungos*, *muqaddams*, zamindars and the *raaya* are to recognise the aforementioned (Ala Singh Chaudhari) as the *amil* of these *mahals* and as such may render all revenue accounts (*malwajib*) to him.

(v) An Agreement (*qaul qarar*) bearing the seal of Muhammad Ramazan dated 17th *Safar* 5th R.Y. (AH 1178/16 August 1764 AD) executed with Ala Singh states<sup>6</sup> that an amount of Rupees four thousand and one

5. *Ibid.*, Doc. No. 2A/147(D), dated 2 *Safar* AH 1178/1 August, 1764 AD.

6. *Ibid.*, Doc. No. 2A/147(F), dated 17 *Safar* AH 1178/16 August 1764 AD.

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had been assessed as the revenues of the *mahals* of Tohana and Jamalpur with effect from the *kharif* crop 1166 *Fasli*/1759 AD with the consent of the aforementioned (Ala Singh). The latter should of his own deposit the assessed amount (with the state treasury) and he would be accordingly given acquittal against this (state) claim by way of written receipt.

(vi) A Receipt dated 14 *Moharram*, 6th R Y. (AH 1179/3 July, 1765 AD) bearing the seals of Hasan Ali Khan and Musai Khan (dated AH 1170/1757 AD) for Rupees seven hundred and fifty only (is) issued to Sandhu Singh<sup>7</sup> in respect of the revenues (*muamalat*) realised by Ala Singh from the zamindars of village Hastpur, *pargana* Hansi for the year 1176 *Fasli*/1761 AD and deposited in the state treasury through Mir Habiballah.

(vii) An undated document<sup>8</sup> gives a detailed statement of the revenues (*hisab-i-muamalat*) relating to Raja Ala Singh with effect from the *rabi fasl* of the 5th year (*Luyil*—The crocodile year, fifth in the Turkish cycle of twelve) to *rabi fasl* of the 8th year (*Quyil*—The sheep year, the 8th in the Turkish cycle of twelve) (*min ibtida-i-fasl-i-rabi Luyil linghayat fasl-i-rabi Quyil*) bearing the (attestation) seal of the said Raja in respect of three crops (*wajib seh faslha*).

Total amount : Rs. 3,46,800

(i) <i>Fasl-i-rabi</i> of 5th year ( <i>Luyil</i> )	=Rs. 85,800/-
(ii) <i>Fasle-i-kharif</i> of the 5th year ( <i>Luyil</i> and the arrears till 8th year ( <i>Quyil</i> ))	=Rs. 61, 000/-
Total amount realised	=Rs. 1,92,000/-
II. Hundis etc.	=Rs. 1,52,000/-
(i) Rs. 72,000/-      ii) Rs. 40,000/-      iii) Rs. 40,000/-	
III. Remission on account of drought and damage as per <i>tumar</i> ( <i>takhfif khushki wa paimali bamujab tumar</i> )	=Rs. 40,000/-
Balance :	=Rs. 154,800

(Other) clauses :

- (i) Relating to *Inam* of the three crops. (*inam seh fasl*)
- (ii) Clause which would be narrated by Ram Singh in his own letter (*khat*).
- (iii) *Altma* : nil.

Attached page :

Perquisites of Raja Ala Singh fixed as per settlement =Rs. 4,001/-

7. *Ibid.*, Doc. No. 2A/147(E), dated 14 *Moharram* AH 1179/3 July, 1765 AD.

8. *Ibid.*, Doc. No. 2A/147(G), undated.

(viii) Timur Shah's *Farman* (original) dated 11 *Rajab* AH 1192/5 August, 1778 (bearing the Durrani *tughra* and seal of Timur Shah) addressed to *Raja-i-Rajgan*, Raja Amar Singh of Patiala,<sup>9</sup> the recipient of the royal favours (*Atwaf-i-Badshahi*) and exalted status (who) should know that since he has shown consistent and firm loyalty and has rendered services to Muhammad Husain (the royal representative), he is confirmed in his possession of *pargana* Tihara. As the *pargana* has always been in his possession as a part of his *taalluqa*, this is bestowed on him. Apart from it, news has reached (the Royal Court) that Hari Singh causes turbulence and rioting in these territories (*mulk*) and (as such) the latter should not be given possession (*dakhil wa tasaruf* in these territories) and should be sent (back) to his *watan* i.e., Multan. Muhammad Husain who has been sent (to Patiala) would explain to him (Raja Amar Singh) some of the matters (*muqadamat*) *Farmans* have also been sent to the other Rajas to the effect that they should remain obedient to him (Raja Amar Singh) The Rajas and the *Rajgan* should show cooperation to each other and exhibit (mutual) bond of friendship. He (Raja Amar Singh) should always consider himself as worthy of the royal favours and should be grateful in this regard

Written on 11th (day) month of *Rajab* AH 1192/5 August, 1778 AD.

(ix) A copy of *Farman* from Timur Shah (bearing the seal of Timur (*Shah Badshah*) dated 11 *Rajab* AH 1192/5 August, 1778 AD addressed to Chauhar Singh (Jauhar Singh) Phul<sup>10</sup> confirms the latter in his past possessions (*taalluqa-i-qadim*) extending from *pargana* Tihara to the territories of Bahadur which have already been in his continuous possession.

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9. P.S.A., Patiala, *Farman* (original) No. D-143 dated 11 *Rajab* AH 1192/5 August, 1778 AD issued by Timur Shah to *Raja-i-Rajgan* Raja Patiala Amar Singh. The *Farman* bears the Durrani *tughra* and seal. File No. A 6 H, Case No. 149 comprises 15 pages inclusive of a copy of the above *Farman*. The file covers original notings (vide registers Nos. 149, 190, 32 dated 8 *Asoj Samvat* 1917/1860 AD) by Kishan Narain *saresh-tadar* of the *Darbar* (of Patiala), which provide detailed information as to how the original *Farman* having been traced was acquired from Rahim Baksh and Hakim Khan Rajputs of village Goindwal on payment of Rupees twenty five (Rs. 25/-) as *inam*. The original *Farman* was kept in a sealed box in *Qila* Mubarak (where the archives of the State were preserved). It may be further observed that on fresh examination, the above *Farman* seems to be genuine in all respects.
10. *Ibid.*, Doc. No. 3A/H, Case No. 405 of 1192 AH; a copy of a *murasa* from Timur Shah Badshah to Chauhar Singh Phul, dated 11 *Rajab* AH 1192/5 August, 1778 AD.

The latter is also authorised to continue the realisation of the cesses relating to *Pahul* (*rasum-i-pahul*) which he has been realising previously as well. He is further enjoined to owe obedience to the Raja of Patiala and also to place his services at the latter's disposal. It has also been brought to His Majesty's notice that Hari Singh creates disturbance and turbulence in his (own) territories. It is desired that he (Chauhar Singh) along with the support of the other Rajas should stop him (Hari Singh) from such rioting so as not to cause suffering to the people. It further states that very shortly Muhammad Husain would be deputed towards these territories and with the help of the Raja of Patiala, he would see that Hari Singh's possessions are incorporated in the state territories (*dakhil-i-mulk-i Padshahi*). As the ancient *watan* (*watan-i-mamula qadimi*) of Hari Singh is situated towards Multan, he should go over there and the revenues of these territories (in possession of Hari Singh in the cis-Satlej region) should be realised by the addressee (Chauhar Singh) with the support of the Raja of Patiala and these territories would remain in the royal possession. In any case, through the services of the Raja of Patiala, Hari Singh would be expelled towards his previous *talluqa* (i.e., towards Multan). In case the latter goes towards the *jangle* side (Lakhi *Jangle*), he (Chauhar Singh) should intervene (so as to drive Hari Singh away). However, he should, in accordance with the past practice, (*ain-i-qadim*), continue to owe obedience to the Raja of Patiala and consider himself to be worthy of the royal favours.

Written on 11 *Rajab* 1192 *Hijri almuqadas*/5 August, 1778 AD.

### III

Apart from the above mentioned documents, there is also a manuscript<sup>11</sup> comprising copies of eight *arzdashts* (Letters of obeisance)

11. *Ibid.*, No. 5A/H. The manuscript (ms) comprises eight folios (fols. 1a—8b). The last letter by Raja Amar Singh (fols. 8a-b) is rather incomplete which shows that the entire ms. is rather incomplete and that originally, it may have covered even more letters. It may also be stated that even earlier these letters were got translated into English by the Patiala *Darbar* and a verified version of the same dated 1-12-1952 appended to the above ms. under the title 'Copies of letters from Raja Ala Singh and Maharaja Amar Singh to Shah Wali Khan of Kabul 1765-66 AD' is also available in the file. However, the free-style translation, even though readable, is rather defective in many a respect. A few passages of some of the letters have been abridged in a manner so as to lose the original sense of the text. At the same time, the oriental technical Persian terms have been translated in a vague and ambiguous manner.



supposed to have been written by Raja Ala Singh and Raja Amar Singh to Shah Wali Khan, the Durrani Prime-Minister. However, one *arzdasht* (No. 5 of the Manuscript-henceforth Ms.) supposed to have been written by Raja Amar Singh does not seem to be genuine. It is clear from its terminology and contents that it was most probably written in the late 19th or early 20th century with a view to appease the *Dewan Khalsa* (*Dewan Shri Khalsa Jeo*) and was intermixed with the copies of the other above mentioned seven *arzdashts*, which, even though undated, are rather true copies of the originals, apparently, earlier in the possession of the Patiala *Darbar*. Of the seven *arzdashts* addressed by the above Rajas to the Durrani Prime-Minister (Shah Wali Khan), two were written by Raja Ala Singh and five by Raja Amar Singh during the most crucial years 1765-66 A.D. It is rather surprising that the scribe who copied the *arzdashts* from the original did not care to note the dates which are usually given at the end of each such an *arzdasht*. However, the internal evidence derived from the contents of each of the seven *arzdashts* does point towards their genuineness. The main facts as narrated in the correspondence are equally corroborated by some other sources and essentially pertain to the years 1765-66 AD.

In the first *arzdasht* (No. 2 of the Ms.)<sup>12</sup>, Raja Ala Singh most humbly acknowledges the receipt of the benign Order (*taliqacha*) from the Prime-Minister (Shah Wali Khan, *Wazir-i-Azam, Dastur Muazzam, Nawab Umadat ul Mulk Asaf Ja.*). He acknowledges the continued favour and kindness bestowed upon him (*gulam*—the royal servant) and expresses gratitude to the latter in most laudatory language for having planned to despatch three lakhs of “triumphant *sawars*” (troops) within three months for the help of his most humble servant (Ala Singh). At the end, he once again thanks the Prime-Minister (Shah Wali Khan) from the core of his heart and comments in a verse that he has no words to express his gratitude for this graciousness.

In the second detailed *arzdasht* (No. 3 of the Ms.),<sup>13</sup> Raja Ala Singh informs the Prime-Minister (Shah Wali Khan) that he has been entrusted with the duties of the management of the affairs of *chakla* (Sirhind) and that in accordance with the latter's orders, he has recruited proper troops for the purpose of administration. (As such), by God's grace, with the help of the staff and officials of the *mahals*, he has already accomplished the work of the assessment and realisation of the revenues, the

12. *Ibid.*, fol. 2a.

13. *Ibid.*, fols. 2a-3b.

habitation of Sirhind, the construction of the mausoleums (*rozas*) and improved the revenue administration. (However), after a month suddenly the entire body of the ignoble Sikhs under the leadership of Hari Singh, Jai Singh, Tara Singh, Lakhna Singh and both the Jassa Singhs etc., along with two groups from the regions of *Majiha* and *Doaba*, larger in number than ants and locusts entered the territories of the *chakla* (Sirhind). (At that time) he was encamping in the vicinity of Patiala. Amar Singh and Himat Singh were despatched towards the forts of Patiala and Handyala along with suitable troops so as to block the way of "all the assembled armies of the infidels destined to be vanquished (*Jama-i-maqhur*)."<sup>2</sup> Assisted by proper forces, Hamir Singh, Bhola Singh, Bahadur Singh and Lakhan Singh were detailed to confront "the wretched assembled (Sikh) troops (*jama-i-nukbat* .)." Thousands of these 'outlaws' were butchered in this bloody battle and a large number of camels and horses were captured as booty. By the grace of God and supported by the good fortune of His Majesty (Ahmad Shah Durrani), with utmost efforts, he was able to chastise "the whole body of the vanquishable infidels (*Jama-i-maqhur*)."<sup>3</sup> Supported by thousands of his brave soldiers and *sawars*, Hari Singh Nahangi killed (many) leaders of that group (*firqa*) such as Budh Singh, nephew of Jassa Singh, brother of Tara Singh and various other persons of known and unknown groups. After their suppression, the troops of "the vanquished infidels (*maqhuran*)"<sup>4</sup> went helter skelter. Some fled towards *Doaba* while others to other different directions. Many of them took to wandering in Maler and Kot Rai. He (Ala Singh) detailed the leaders of his army along with seasoned troops to pursue the enemies and their atrocities were stopped. As such, these days, those "ill-fated men" were causing turbulence and rioting in Ambala and Shahabad and every day, there was confrontation with them.

(Ala Singh further informs that) whatever amount of the revenues (*maliyat*) of the *mahals* had been realised from the beginning (of the season), had been spent on the salaries of the soldiers. Besides, loans were (also) raised to make payments. May God Almighty bring him (the Durrani) in this country (Punjab-Sirhind) so that the host of enemies (the Sikhs) may be completely annihilated through his ominous sword and the ground made impious by these groups (the Sikhs) may be rendered as pious. His (Shah Wali Khan's/Ahmad Shah Durrani's) parting instructions relating to the matters of administration were being wholeheartedly and faithfully, acted upon. For meeting the losses due

to the devastation of the territories and the heavy expenditure involved therein, he (Ala Singh) hopefully counts upon the royal magnanimity. Further position will be communicated through an *arzdasht*.

In his first *arzdasht* (No. 1 of the Ms.)<sup>14</sup> Raja Amar Singh after conveying his compliments to Nawab Sahib *Umdat-ul-Mulk* Asaf Ja (Shah Wali Khan, the Durrani Prime-Minister) states that his grand father Raja Ala Singh in response to his (Durrani Prime-Minister's) *taliqacha* (Order) had already sent a reply through a messenger to his exalted Honour (Prime Minister) in which he expressed his gratitude for the latter's benefications and narrated detailed facts about the atrocities and calamity wrought by "the villainous multitude of the Sikh troops, i.e., the infidels destined to be vanquished (*nakbat mal jamai Sikhhan shakawat nishan*)". There after, the very next day he (Raja Ala Singh) was taken ill and breathed his last on Friday, 4th *Rabi-ul-Awal* (22 August, 1765 A D.) as a true and faithful servant of his Honour (the Durrani Prime Minister) and that his (Ala Singh's) devotion and (spirit of) submission were manifest from the letter that he wrote to the latter during his life-time. Raja Amar Singh reiterates that he too was imbued with the same spirit of devotion and faithfulness and prays to the Almighty God for his (Durrani Prime Minister's) health and life.

(Raja Amar Singh further states) that "the vanquishable armies of the infidels (*maqhurana*—the Sikhs)," having been suppressed after various battles had calmed down (but) now these days again "their numerous wretched and wicked groups of troops (*amboh-i-groh nukbat pizhuh*)" intended to commit meanness and vagrancy. Since by God's grace, the addressee's (Nawab Shah Wali Khan's) sympathies were with him (Raja Amar Singh), those men would be soon subdued and put to shame. He (Raja Amar Singh) solely depends upon his help and feels confident that he (Shah Wali Khan) would always show kindness and bestow favours upon him. Further details would be known to him from the letter (*arz*) of Ghulam Muhammad Khan (the Reporter).

In his second *arzdasht* (No. 4 of the Ms.)<sup>15</sup> addressed to the Durrani Prime-Minister (Shah Wali Khan) and Raja Amar Singh states that the events (pertaining to the period) prior to the death of his grandfather, Raja Ala Singh, had (already) been reported to him. (However), ever since he (Raja Amar Singh) had been entrusted with the services (for the administration) of *chakla* Sirhind, through his grace, the condition of

14. *Ibid.*, fols. 1a-2a.

15. *Ibid.*, fols. 3b-5a.

the *taalluqas* had considerably improved. Moreover, detailed information regarding the condition and state of affairs in these territories had been already communicated to him through the letter of Ghulam Muhammad Khan, the Reporter (*waqia-nawis*) of *chakla* Sirhind. He had also learnt through the official messenger (*harkara*) that the *taliqacha* (Order) addressed to him (Raja Amar Singh) had been lost in transit due to turbulence on the part of "the destined vanquishable infidels (*maqhuran*—the Sikhs)" and he was very sorry for its non-receipt. However, he respectfully submits that after the victorious Ahmad Shah's troops were withdrawn, "the contemptible and infidel armies (of the Sikhs) destined to be vanquished" have caused turmoil, devastated the territories (*mulk*), rendered the administration of *chakla* Sirhind chaotic and excepting the Capital (Delhi), they have pillaged the territories of Jawahar Singh Jat. During the (past) two years, he (Raja Amar Singh) had mobilised considerable army for the defence and management of the forts and *zamindaries* (*makanat*) and combated "the large gatherings of the infidel troops destined for destruction (*Jamhur-i-maqhur*)—the Sikhs." As such, whatever cash and kind had been confiscated during the life-time of his ancestor (grandfather) at the time of his (Shah Wali Khan's) campaign at Barnala (*wadah gallughara*) had (already) been spent in quelling rioting on the part of "the gathered infidel troops destined for destruction (*jama-i-maqhur*—the Sikhs)" and he has been put under considerable debt. Apart from this, his own younger brother Himmat Singh having been allured by the enemies had stood against him so as to cause turbulence. In these circumstances, he was obliged to draw his attention (to these facts) and seek his help. An understanding (*qaulnama*) bearing the Royal Seal for the protection and guardianship on hereditary basis had been issued in favour of his grandfather (Raja Ala Singh) and the *sanad* giving undertaking for the latter's welfare and financial interests on hereditary basis was in his possession. As he had rendered meritorious services with all humbleness, more than (even) that of his grandfather, he expected magnanimity and gracious kindness. May God afford him (Shah Wali Khan) a favourable time and opportunity so that the enemies (the Sikhs) may be annihilated by the victorious sword of Islam and the obedient ones (Raja Amar Singh) may pass their days in a fortunate and courageous manner with full faith in him. Further details will be known to him from the letters of Amir Beg and Kashmiri Mal.

It has already been observed that Raja Amar Singh's third *arzasht*—i.e., No. 5 of the Ms.<sup>16</sup>—does not seem to be genuine. As such, only a

16. *Ibid.*, fols. 5a-6b.

summary has been provided.

In this *arzdasht*, Raja Amar Singh offers his heartiest felicitations to Shah Wali Khan, the Durrani Prime-Minister on the latter's elevation by a grant of precious *khillat*, an elephant and a *khasa* horse from the King (Ahmad Shah Durrani). Thereafter the Raja states that his family had been a true disciple of *Darbar-i-Guru* and *Sangat* for the last seven generations. Having been blessed by the Gurus, it had been recipient of special benefactions at Amritsar. Raja Amar Singh claims the association of his family with the fourth and the fifth Gurus. He further claims that his family earned distinction by defeating the Turks at Gurusar during the time of the sixth Guru and that after serving the threshold of the seventh Guru, it was deputed to manage the state of affairs of the *illaqa* (territory) of Malwa. The family further served the eighth Guru at Delhi and rendered service to the ninth Guru when the latter visited this part of the country (Malwa). The Raja further states that the tenth Guru (Guru Gobind Singh) visited this place and after blessing the family entrusted it with the service of the *illaqa* of Malwa. (As such, the command of the Guru and Shah Wali Khan's benevolence account for the development of not only the Sikhs but even the state of animals and vegetation of this area. The Raja further points out that *Akal Purkh* (the Almighty God) has blessed the *Khalsa* (perhaps here the Durrani) with the kingdoms of Hindustan and Iran and would also show mercy to his family and that Shri Guru Gobind Singh would pay attention to the condition of the Sikhs of this *illaqa* and would do full justice by making it prosperous one. The Raja makes *ardas* (request) to *Khalsa Dewan* for the betterment of the Malwa. He equally attributes the elegance and prosperity to the Master and King of this country (here Ahmad Shah Durrani) and pleads for taking care of the Malwa and its Sikhs.

In his fourth *arzdasht* (No. 6 of the Ms)<sup>17</sup> addressed to the Durrani Prime-Minister (Shah Wali Khan), Raja Amar Singh states that his previous letters (*araiz*) must have been pursued by the latter. At present the position is that 'large number of wretched infidel troops destined to be vanquished (*groh-i-amboh-i-maqhuran shaqawat pizhuh*—the Sikhs)' have again created turbulence, have taken to vagrancy in the *mahals* of the *chakla* (Sirhind) and are indulging in pillage and plunder. He (Raja Amar Singh) further states that in addition to the permanent standing forces (*jamiat-i-qadim fauj*), he mustered auxiliary forces as far as he

17. *Ibid.*, fols. 6b-7a.

could. He had to incur enormous expenditure for the safety and preservation of his *zamindari*s (*makanat*) and the forts. Apart from the turmoil on the part of these "vanquishable armed infidels (*maqhurān*—the Sikhs)" these days, his own younger brother, Himmat Singh having been seduced by the opponents on their side has equally become hostile and turbulent. He (Raja Amar Singh) did his level best to persuade him, through reliable persons, to accept his share and to dissociate himself from the destruction of the villages. But being influenced by the jealous persons, he did not come around and participated in skirmishes. (As such), because of the aforementioned insurgence, the damage and devastation of the villages, he has been burdened with heavy expenditure and for the last three years, he has faced worries and great difficulties. Needless to stress that he has no other mainstay excepting his benefactor (Shah Wali Khan). He considers that his betterment and fortune, both physical and financial, lie in allegiance and servitude, to *Huzur-i-Ali* (Shah Wali Khan). (As such), he often seeks favours from the latter so that the victorious flag (the Durrani's) may fly over this territory (Punjab-Malwa) and his devoted servants (like Raja Amar Singh) may successfully live in peace and prosperity with full faith in him (Shah Wali Khan). This would as well enable in the mitigation of the evil disturbance on the part of the "impious group" (the Sikhs) by the sword of the fearless conquerors so as to render this territory a pious one. Further details are being communicated through the letters (*araiz*) of Honourable (*Alija*) Amir Beg and Kashmiri Mal.

In his fifth *arzdast* (No. 7 of the Ms.)<sup>18</sup> addressed to the Durrani Prime-Minister (Shah Wali Khan), Raja Amar Singh states that in order to offer his obeisance he had traversed over three stages but returned (to Patiala) according to his (Shah Wali Khan's) instructions from the latter had hurriedly left due to an emergency. This return journey on his (Raja Amar Singh's) part took eight to nine days. Finding this an appropriate opportunity, Himmat Singh and Hamir Singh resorted to turbulence and pillages, occupied and attached two to three villages of the *taalluqa*. However, as soon as he (Raja Amar Singh) reached Patiala, he despatched the troops comprising both cavalry and infantry for confrontation with the enemies. By God's grace and with his (Shah Wali Khan's) constant kindness, there were continual skirmishes but the enemy forces having been defeated in every battle felt harassed and dispersed.

18. *Ibid.*, fols. 7a-8a.

(Consequently), ten to twelve villages of the enemy were annexed by him (Raja Amar Singh) and several more villages (of the enemy) were inclined to come under the jurisdiction of his *thanas*. By God's grace and his (Shah Wali Khan's) kindnesses, all the desired work will be accomplished. (As such) Himmat Singh who had committed mischief on the instigation of Hamir Singh and other opponents, would come to his senses shortly after having met with reverses. May God always bestow His gracious shadow of kindness upon him (Shah Wali Khan) so that the slaves (like Raja Amar Singh) may be blessed with prosperous material position by the former's kindness and favours. It may not be (considered as) impertinence on his part if he were to most humbly draw his (Shah Wali Khan's) kind attention for the issue of *parwanas* favourable to his (Raja Amar Singh's) family.

In his sixth *arzdahst* (No. 8 of the Ms.)<sup>19</sup> addressed to the Durrani Prime-Minister (Shah Wali Khan), Raja Amar Singh states that letters intimating the state of affairs had (already) been despatched to him and he must have pursued the marginal writings. Now the position is that "large number of contemptible infidel troops destined to be annihilated (*groh-i-an.boh-i-maqahir nukbat pizhuh*—the Sikhs)" after having caused commotion and become mutinous and having destroyed the *mahals* and cities of *chakla* Sirhind are now rioting and roaming about in *Doaba*. They are (also) spreading mischief in the bordering *qasbas* and villages of *chakla* Sirhind by establishing *thanas* in his (Raja Amar Singh's) House (*Zamindari*) as well as through incursions and pillages. Apart from the turbulence of these "detested infidels destined for destruction (*maqhurran*), these days, his brother, Himmat Singh being misguided by the mischief-mongers having caused disturbance and ruination of the homeland (*watan*) endeavours to establish his own hold (*taalluqa*). But as God's grace and his (Shah Wali Khan's) kindness are always with him (Raja Amar Singh), he (Himmat Singh) has always met with failure and the mischief-mongering opponents indulging in turbulence feel disillusioned and repentant. But he is not fully satisfied with the position. The enormous expenditure incurred on battles, the pay of the auxiliary forces (*sawar* and *piyada*) over and above the permanent troops (*jamiat-i-qadimi*) during the (last) three years as well as the devastation of the villages of the *zamindari* (*dehat-i-taalluq*) are beyond adequate description. As his (Shah Wali Khan's) generosity is as much a shelter for him as it

19. *Ibid.*, fols. 8a-8b.

was for his grandfather (Raja Ala Singh) and his betterment lies in absolute submission (*gulami*) to him (Shah Wali Khan), his eyes are keenly set on his (Shah Wali Khan's) expected visit. May God fulfill his ardent desire for his (Shah Wali Khan's) victorious visit in this direction so that the clouds of turbulence on the part of the enemies may be mitigated and their (Raja Amar Singh's and the Durrani's) objects may be accomplished in a victorious manner. He expects and would like to claim as much benevolence from him (Shah Wali Khan) as previously extended to the late Raja (Raja Ala Singh).

IV

Commentry

Hitherto the historians have mostly highlighted the military and political aspects of the Durrani campaigns in North India during the course of 18th century.<sup>20</sup> Much has been written on the campaigns of Ahmad Shah Abdali *vis-a-vis* the Mughal State and the Marathas resulting in the third battle of Panipat (1761) as well as the Afghan-Sikh tussle for supremacy in the Punjab and the cis-Satlej (i.e. cis-Sutlej) territories (*subah* Delhi) during the second half of the 18th century. There is no denying the fact that many contemporary and later Persian sources, especially chronicles, a few Marathi and English sources have been tapped for the narrative details covering the politico-military aspects. However, it is much less realised that as a result of annexation of the *subahs* of Lahore, Multan, Kashmir (1752)<sup>21</sup> and *chakla* Sirhind (Sirhind), *subah* Delhi (1757)<sup>22</sup> to the Afghan Empire of Kabul extending from

20. Only works based on original sources may be cited. J.N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II (1754-1771), Calcutta, 1934, H.R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs* (1739-1799), Vol. I, *Evolution of the Sikh Confederacies*, (1739-68), revised ed. Simla, 1952, Vol. II ; *Cis-Sutlej Sikhs*, Lahore, 1944 ; *Marathas and Panipat*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1951 ; G.S. Sardesai, *New History of the Marathas*, Vol. II, *The Expansion of the Maratha Power*, Bombay, 1948, pp. 353-461 ; Ganda Singh, *Ahmad Shah Durrani*, *op. cit.*, No. 1 ; Kirpal Singh, *Maharaja Ala Singh of Patiala and His Times*, *op. cit.*, No. 1.

21. *Selections from the Peshwa Daftar*, ed. G.S. Sardesai, (henceforth S.P.D.), XXI, Letters Nos. 53 and 55 ; Saiyyad Ullah Shah Abadi, *Bagh-i-Sulaiman*, Research and Publications Division, J & K Srinagar, (written in AH 1194/1780-81 AD) Ms. No. 51, fols. 235a-239b.

22. S.P.D. II, p. 71. This is further confirmed by the fact that henceforth in the territories of *chakla* Sirhind, all the *sanads* relating to the land grants, fresh or renewed, in respect of *mdad-i-maash* and *aimma* were issued under the seal of Ahmad Shah Durrani. For details, P.S.A., Patiala, copies of *Farmans/Sanads* etc., vide Register D/1, fols. 20a, 22b-23b; Register D/3, fol. 8b ; Register D/5, fols. 51a-52b, 58b-59a, 64-b, 146a-b, 169a-b, 173a, 236a, 261b-262a.



Afghanistan to Kernal (*chakla* Sirhind), the Durrani state set up its own administration both for the purposes of governance and realisation of the revenues of the territories. Undeniably, prior to the battle of Panipat (January, 1761), the Afghan rule in the *subah* of Lahore and cis-Satlej territories experienced considerable instability. It was practically made extinct by the Maratha operations (February-April, 1758) which were supported mainly by Adina Beg, the *faujdar* of Jalandhar and partly by the Sikhs.<sup>23</sup> For about a year and a half (April, 1758-October, 1759), the Marathas virtually ruled over the Punjab and the cis-Satlej territories. They appointed Khoja Mirza Khan as the *subadar* of Lahore whereas Adina Beg was continued as the *faujdar* of *sarkar* Jalandhar, Sahaba Patel was posted at Attock. However, after about a year because of the tyranny and highhandedness on the part of Khoja Mirza Khan, the latter was replaced by Dada Rao Shaisha Pandit as the *subadar* of Lahore.<sup>24</sup> They also appointed another *subedar* at Multan and a *faujdar* at *chakla* Sirhind for the purposes of administration and collection of the revenues.<sup>25</sup> It is as well on record that for this period (April, 1758—October, 1759), they were able to realise the farmed out revenues from the Punjab and the cis-Satlej territories.<sup>26</sup> Even though the battle of Panipat (January, 1761) gave a fatal blow to the Maratha Supremacy in Multan, Punjab and cis-Satlej territories, the Durrani rule in the Punjab could not be easily consolidated due to severe opposition on the part of the Sikhs. As a matter of fact, the ultimate failure of the short but significant Maratha rule in Multan, Punjab and cis-Satlej territories paved the way for the regional forces leading to the rise of the power of the Sikh Sardars who were able to establish themselves on an institutionalised basis. Notwithstanding the repeated campaigns on the part of Ahmad Shah

23. Tahmas Khan Miskin, *Kitab-i-Qissa-i-Tahmas Miskin* (written in AH 1196/44 R.Y. Shah Alam/1780 AD) also popularly known as *Tazkira-i-Tahmas Miskin*, Ms. British Museum, Or m., 1918 No. Pers. 8807, fols. 83b-90a; *Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani* (anonymous), Br. Mus, Persian Ms. Or 1749, fols. 150a-151b, 164b-165b, 178a-205a; *S.P.D.*, Vol. 25, Letters Nos. 163, 178-79; Vol. 27, L. 220; Vol. 28, L. 218; Mofti Ali-ud-Din, *Ebratnameh (Ebratnameh wa Umadut-ul-Tawarikh—completed in 1854 AD/1911 Samvat)*, ed. Muhammad Baqjir, Lahore (Pakistan), 2 Vol., 1961 (henceforth Ali-ud-Din), pp. 218-23.

24. *Ibid.*

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. Asar Nayaz, *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura* (written in 1823 AD), ed. Muhammad Baqar, Lahore, 1973 (henceforth *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura*), pp. 80-86.

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Abdali, there was a continual tug of war and during the interregnum of the campaigns, based on kinship and local territorial proximity, many a *groh* of the Sardars were able to carve out territorial jurisdictions in various parts of the Punjab over which they established superior *zamindari* rights. As such, they claimed share in the surplus produce from the traditional landed intermediaries and the local zamindars. Even though the contemporary Persian, Marathi and English sources do not use the term *misl*, the establishment of such an institution under a Sardar and *sardari* by a chief Sardar over and above the (*misl*) Sardars<sup>28</sup> fundamentally altered the character of armed struggle against the Durrani as well as the revenue administration of the agrarian set-up.

Based upon the hitherto unutilised contemporary archival source-material in coordination with the other Persian and Marathi sources of multifarious nature, it is worthwhile to examine the Durrani administrative pattern in detail in the Afghan territories of North India during the second half of the 18th century. Notwithstanding strong elements of continuity with the Mughal age, partly influenced by its own pattern of administration and partly due to pragmatic considerations based upon political and economic factors, some marked changes did take place in the evolution of the Afghan pattern of administration in its territories in North India.

As a case study, the above mentioned documents translated into English bring out some of the salient features of the Afghan pattern of administrative polity as well as agrarian infrastructure in the cis-Satlej territories (*subah* Delhi). During the Mughal age, *chakla* Sirhind was put under the administrative and revenue charge of a *faujdar*.<sup>29</sup> Under the

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28. Rajasthan Archives Bikaner, *Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* (henceforth *Akhbar*). Of the numerous instances, only a few may be cited. *Akhbar* dated 28 *Zulhijja*, AH 1176/11 July, 1763 AD; 20 *Muharram*, AH 1177/13 August, 1762 AD; 29 *Shaban*, AH 1177/3 March, 1764 AD; 28 *Zulhijja*, AH 1177/28 June, 1764 AD; 30 *Jumada I*, AH 1178/25 November, 1764 AD; 25 *Jumada II*, AH 1182/6 November, 1768 AD. National Archives of India, New Delhi, Original Receipts, Foreign Deptt., Persian Branch *Akhbar* (henceforth N.A.I. *Akhbar*) No. 160, OR 10, p. 3, 12 February, 1785; No. 161, OR 10, pp. 8-10, 15 February, 1785, *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura*, pp. 87-94.

29. Although the Mughal Age, the *faujdar* was in charge of the *sarkar* administration. Even when *chaklas* comprising numerous *parganas* were constituted (vide *Khulasatu-s-Siyaq*, Ms. Orient Qurat 243, Berlin, fols. 159a-b; Ms. Sulaiman Collection (74), Ms. 410/143, A.M.U. Aligarh, fol. 16a), the adminis-

[continued on page 214

Durrani this practice was continued for some time. However, the *taliqacha* (Order) issued by the Durrani Prime-Minister dated 22 *Shaban* AH 1174/29 March, 1761 AD mentions Faiz Talab Khan Durrani as the *subadar* and in charge of revenue administration (*sahib-i-ikhtiyar-i-maliyat*) of *chakla* Sirhind.<sup>30</sup> The latter *chakla* had already been detached from the Mughal *subah* of Delhi and put under the direct Durrani administration. It seems in the context that under the Durrani, at times, the administration of the *chakla* was put under the charge of a *subadar* (Governor) who occupied quite distinct position from the Afghan *subadars* of Kashmir, Multan and Lahore. However, for many a year, the contemporary Mughal (*Akhbarat*) (News-Letters) as well as later sources usually mention *faujdar* as in charge of the administration of *chakla* Sirhind.<sup>31</sup> This may as well indicate that even though the *subahs* of Kashmir, Multan and Lahore were always put under the charge of *subadars*, *chakla* Sirhind could be governed by a *subadar* if the incumbent was rather senior but mostly by a *faujdar* on the traditional Mughal pattern. All the same, in 1761 AD, the overall supervisory powers for the management of the revenues and administration of *chakla* Sirhind were vested with the Mughal *Amir-ul-Umra Bakshi-ul-Mulk* Najib Khan Bahadur (Najib-ud-daula) who acted as the *wakil* of the Durrani Government in

*continued from page 213]*

trative charge of the *chakla* remained with the *faujdar* usually also vested with the functions of an *amin* and this office was always considered distinct and subordinate to *nazim/subadar* of a *subah*. *Sarkar/Chakla* Sirhind formed a part of *suba* Delhi. It is well borne by all the contemporary sources that the position even for *chakla* Sirhind remained the same during the first half of the 18th century prior to the Durrani campaigns or rather even till 1757 AD when it was ceded to the Durrani Empire. Some sources mention the *faujdar* as *hakim* of the *sarkar/chakla*. However, some later sources put him as the *chakladar* in respect of both Mughal/Durrani periods. (vide *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura*, pp. 75-76); *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, pp. 46-47, 50-51). At the same time, a later source, Ali-ud-Din, p. 332 mentions Sadiq Beg as the *nazim* of Sirhind under Mohammad Shah Rangila (1718-48) which is a rather loose expansion. Many modern scholars too use the designation of Governor for the *faujdar/amin* of Sirhind which is rather inept.

30. *op. cit.*, No. 2.

31. Only a few instances may be cited. *Akhbar* dated 2 *Shawwal*. AH 1177/4 April, 1764 AD; 19 *Shaban* AH 1182/11 February, 1765 AD; 5 *Ramzan* AH 1183/21 January, 1770 AD. In fact, Abdus Samad Khan was the first *faujdar* appointed by the Durrani administration in *chakla* Sirhind vide *op. cit.*, No. 23. Ali-ud-Din, pp. 220, 234.

this regard. After him, even *wakil-i-mutalik* Najaf Khan (d. 1782) as well as the Marathas as *wakil-i-mutlak* (Mahadaji Sindhia with effect from November, 1784) of the Mughal state continued to discharge this responsibility on behalf of the Durrani Government.

During the Mughal Age, Ala Singh Jat held the position of a *chaudhuri* and as a landed intermediary was reckoned as one of the chief *zamindars* responsible for the realisation of the revenues from the territories (villages/*parganas*) assigned in *zamindari* by the Mughal state.<sup>32</sup> He was equally responsible for the maintenance of law and order in these Mughal territories. In lieu of these services, he enjoyed revenue-free *jagir* lands as well as *chaudhuri/zamindari* perquisites. After the occupation of the cis-Satlej territories by the Durrani (1757), Ala Singh

32. P.S.A., Patiala, Doc. No. D 142—a Mughal *Farman* dated 21 *Ramazan*, AH 1137/3 June 1725 AD, addressed by the Emperor Muhammad Shah to Ala, *zamindar (chaudhuri)* of Padur enjoins the latter to take up residence at Sirhind, stamp out dacoity and turbulence as well as to safeguard the (trade) route from Lahore to Delhi. The *Farman* also ensures the subordination of the other *jagirdars* and Rajas to him and in lieu of his services, also promises the conferment of the title of *rajgi* upon him. Also, *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, pp. 44-45, states that the *Farman* was conveyed to Ala Singh through Mir Mannu (son of Qamar-ud-Din Khan) and Samai Yar Khan. But Kirpal Singh vide *Life of Maharaja Ala Singh and His Times, op. cit.* No. 1, pp. 172-181 has contested the genuineness of the *Farman*. However, in view of the fact that the commercial caravans and even the royal convoys on the main Delhi-Kabul route passing through the disturbed territories of Sirhind were often plundered around 1721 AD and thereafter (vide Saiyid Muhammad Bilgrami, *Tabsirat-un-Nazirin Ms., Farisya Akhbar* No. 204, Aligarh Muslim University, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh, fol. 82a) rather points out to the possibility of the issue of the *Farman* with the above mentioned contents. All the same, the *zamindari/chaudhuri* status of Ala Singh during the Mughal Age is well confirmed by the *kafiyats* (statements) based on the family revenue documents recorded around 1869-70 *Samvat/1812-13 AD* during the reign of Maharaja Sahib Singh of Patiala. (vide P.S.A., Patiala, Doc. No. A. 10. *H-Farist tafsil aulad Sardar Phul mai Kafiyat abadi mai mauza Phul*, fols. 27b.). The *kafiyats* cover the geneology, ownership and *zamindari* rights in the inherited and self developed villages of the various *parganas* as well as respective *chaudhuri* shares held by the members/branches of the family since the late 17th century. The detailed list and *kafiyat of aladi* (settlement of villages etc.) traces the family history to Sardar Phul, the head of the family who initially developed land and acquired *chaudhuri/zamindari* rights. Apart from other descendant members of the branch families, Ala Singh, son of Sardar Rama and grandson of Sardar Phul inherited his own *zamindari/Chaudhuri* villages in a few *parganas* while he also further extended his territorial jurisdiction. (*Ibid.*, fols. 6a-7a, 14a-14b, 24a-27a); also Ali-ud-Din, p. 332.

Jat accepted the Durrani sovereignty. As such, he was not only continued with the *status-quo* as the chief zamindar (*zamindar-i-kalan*) but was bestowed larger territories (*villages/mahals*) for the revenue administration for which he was responsible to the Durrani administration of *chakla* Sirhind.<sup>33</sup> He was also conferred the status of *rajgi* alongwith the functions of a *faujdar* of a few *parganas*.<sup>34</sup> As the *zamindari* system ran on hierarchical pattern, all the petty zamindars *chaudhuris* as well as the *qanungos* and the *ra'aya* in these territories were obliged to render him full services in the collection of the state revenues for which they were entitled to their respective revenue-free land grants, *inam* and perquisites, etc.<sup>35</sup> Of course, as *faujdar* on the Mughal pattern, he not only commanded jurisdiction over the other *zamindars*, the *chaudhuries*, the *qanungos* and *ra'aya* for the revenue administration but was equally responsible for the maintenance of law and order as well as for safeguarding the interests of the state (Durrani), both internally and externally.<sup>36</sup>

The *taliqachas* (Orders) of Shah Wali Khan, the Durrani Prime-Minister dated 22 *Shaban* AH 1174/29 March, 1761 AD and 7 *Shaban* AH 1176/12 February, 1763 AD specifically mention Ala Singh Jat as a zamindar who held the *jagirs* in the category of *wukala-i-ali* (*jagir-i-wukala-i-Ali*).<sup>37</sup> This clearly brings out the enhanced status of Ala Singh who was appointed as *wakil-i-ali* (chief representative) by the Durrani state. Even though under the Mughal Government, the chief zamindars (*zamindaran-i-umda*) did act on behalf of the state in the military, revenue and administrative matters, it is difficult to trace the designation of *wakil-i-ali* attached with any of them. Rather on the contrary, the chief zamindars (*zamindar-i-umda*) had their own *wakils* (representatives) attached with the Provincial or Central Mughal Headquarters. It seems in the context that after annexation, the Durrani Government recognized many a chief zamindar as its chief representative (*wukala-i-ali*) and clearly demarcated territories (*villages/mahals*) assigned in *jagir* to them

33. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 2, 5-8; For Ala Singh's role as zamindar and for helping the Durrani administration in the realization of the revenues from different regions of the *chakla* Sirhind, also see *Akhbar* dated 28 *Zulhijja* AH 1176/ 11 July, 1763 AD; 20 *Muharram* AH 1177/ 31 July, 1763 AD; 17 *Ramazan* AH 1178/ 10 March, 1765 AD.

34. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 4, 5, 13; *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura*, p. 78.

35. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 4, 5.

36. *Ibid.*; also *op. cit.*, Nos. 12, 13.

37. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 3 and 4.

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under the category *jagir-i-wukala-i-ali*.<sup>38</sup> This distinguished their *jagir* lands from the *jagirs* of the other Durrani officials in the *zamindari* territories or the directly administered *khalisa* territories. This was quite parallel to the Mughal practice which equally demarcated the assignable territories in *jagir* to the *mansabdars* or zamindars (*jagir/paibaqi*) from the *khalisa* territories administered directly by the state.<sup>39</sup> It is also evident from the contents of the above mentioned *taliqachas* (Orders) that in the cis-Satlej territories, Ala Singh Jat was one of the many zamindars who were granted *jagirs* as chief representatives (*wukala-i-ali*).<sup>40</sup> Of course, he had his own representatives (*wakils*) who acted as liaison officers with the Durrani administration.<sup>41</sup>

The Durrani pattern of revenue administration in *chakla* Sirhind shows that the villages/*mahals taalluqas* assigned in *jagir* to Ala Singh Jat as zamindar cum *wakil-i-ali* were detached from the direct administrative jurisdiction of the *chakla* authorities (*subadar/faujdar/darogha* etc.) and put under the revenue administration of Ala Singh as the *jagirdar*.<sup>42</sup> All the same, it is clear from the documents that before passing over the *jagir* territories to the *jagirdars*, the valuation of the revenues of the villages/*mahals* was made on the basis of actual assessment by the Durrani official (*darogha*) of *chakla* Sirhind.<sup>43</sup> For this purpose, Mirza Muhammad Taqi was entrusted with the job to be carried out in cooperation with the representatives (*wakils*) of the assigned i.e. Ala Singh Jat and all the accounts were to be attested and stamped by the *qazi*. The expenses of the Durrani official for undertaking such revenue job were met and deducted from the revenues of the assigned *jagir*.<sup>44</sup>

It is rather significant to observe that by March, 1761 AD, Ala Singh's *jagir* as the zamindar and *wakil-i-ali* comprised only 726 villages from the *parganas* i.e. Sunam, Gharam, Sanwar and Mansurpur and that not a single *en block* (*darobast*) *pargana* was assigned to him.<sup>45</sup> It

38. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 2, 4, 9.

39. For details, B.R. Grover, 'Nature of Land Rights in Mughal India', Indian Economic and Social History Review, 1, 1963, pp. 1-23.

40. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 2, 3, 4.

41. *Op. cit.*, No. 2.

42. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 2, 3, 4.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Op. cit.*, No. 3.

45. *Op. cit.*, No. 2.

was only after about a couple of years i.e., 12 February, 1763 AD, that the revenues of four full-fledged *parganas* i.e., Sanam, Mansurpur, Gharam, and Sanwar were assigned *enblock* (darobast) in *jagir* to him with full control over the revenue administration of these *mahals*.<sup>46</sup> Ala Singh was also vested with the *faujdari* jurisdiction of these four *parganas*.<sup>47</sup> As such, with enhanced status, Ala Singh was not merely a *chaudhuri* zamindar, chief Durrani representative (*wakil-i-ali*) but also the *faujdar* of these *parganas* from which stipulated revenues were also assigned to him in *jagir* in lieu of the services rendered to the Durrani state. There were, of course, various other petty *zamindari*s in these *parganas* which did not form a part of the *taalluqa* i.e., personal *zamindari* jurisdiction of Ala Singh.<sup>48</sup> But in his capacity of the *faujdar*, *darogha* and *zabit-i-maliyat* (assessment officer), he possessed full revenue and administrative powers over all the petty zamindars, *chaudhuries*, *qanungos*, *thanadars* and other revenue officials of these territories.<sup>49</sup> Of course, as *jagirdar* vested with the powers of the *darogha* and *zabit* (administrator cum assessor), he was required to make assessment and collect the revenues (*maliyat* and *abwab-ul-jama*) in accordance with the local established practice.<sup>50</sup> This clearly shows that for purposes of revenue administration, the procedure of measurement of land, the methods of assessment and the magnitude of the revenues (*mal* and *abwab*) were the same under the Durrani administration as inherited from the Mughal age.

In addition to the assignment of *jagir* territories from the various above mentioned *parganas* as well as conferment of the *faujdari* powers of the four *parganas* (Sanam, Mansurpur, Gharam and Sanwar), by 1764 AD, Ala Singh was given additional charge as the *naib* (deputy) *faujdar*, *amin* (assessment officer), cum *amil* (collector) of the *parganas* of Tohana and Jamalpur.<sup>51</sup> For the discharge of these duties, he was entitled to establish perquisites. It is also clear that Ala Singh had been discharging such functions in respect of these two *parganas* since 1759 AD (1166 *Fasli*).<sup>52</sup> However, they did not by any means form part of his personal *jagir* and he was required to deposit the revenues of these

46. *Op. cit.*, No. 4.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 4, 5.

49. *Op. cit.*, No. 3, 4, 5.

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Op. cit.*, No. 4, 5.

52. *Op. cit.*, No. 6.

## AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEMPORARY DURRANI REVENUE DOCUMENTS

*parganas* in the Durrani state treasury (*chakla* Sirhind) after the deduction of his perquisites in lieu of the above mentioned duties performed by him.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, he acted as the zamindar cum collector of the revenues of some villages in *pargana* Hansi and deposited the same in the state treasury.<sup>54</sup>

As a matter of fact, from the above mentioned few documents, it is difficult to work out the total number of villages/*parganas* in the *taalluqa* (*zamindari*) jurisdiction of Ala Singh nor is it possible to determine the total revenues assigned to him in *jagir* in lieu of the services rendered by him as *darogha*, *faujdar*, *amin* and *amil* in many a *pargana* under his jurisdiction. However, significantly a revenue document of the above collection puts rupees three lakh, forty six thousand and eight hundred only (Rs. 3,46,800/-) as the total amount of the revenues (*muamalat*) realised by Ala Singh from his *zamindari* territories,<sup>55</sup> which he was obliged to pay to the Durrani Government after the deduction of his own perquisites. The statement of the revenue account (*hisab-i-muamalat*) covers the revenues of the *rabi* crop (*fasl-i-rabi*) and the *kharif* crop (*fasl-i-kharif*) of the 5th Year (*Luyil*) as well as the arrears till the 8th Year (*Quyil*). The statement also shows that during the process of assessment, a regular remission was afforded to the *ra'aya* on account of natural calamity or the other damages done to the crops.<sup>56</sup> This was equally in line with the Mughal practice.<sup>57</sup> In this regard, a regular remission of Rs. 40,000/- was given to the *ra'aya* on account of drought as well as destruction of the crops due to *paimali* (trampling of the crops by the horses/cattle/forces during the military operations).<sup>58</sup> Of the revenues realised by Ala Singh, payment was made to the Durrani Government both in cash and by *hundis*.<sup>59</sup> As regards remunerations for the services rendered as zamindar, Ala Singh was given *inam* (which could be made in cash or by way of land grant) in respect of all the three crops (*inam-i-seh fasl*) for which he collected the revenues on behalf of the Durrani state.<sup>60</sup> However, the amount of *inam* is not mentioned.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Op. cit.*, No. 7.

55. *Op. cit.*, No. 8.

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Khulasat-us Siyaq, op. cit.*, No. 29, fols. 151a-152b and fols. 10a-11b respectively.

58. *Op. cit.*, No. 8 ; also *Ibid.*

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Ibid.*



But it is clearly stated that in lieu of his *zamindari* rights, Ala Singh was paid rupees four thousand and one only (Rs. 4,001/-), as perquisites as per settlement.<sup>61</sup> Here the term *maliyat* stands for the actual revenues payable by him to the Durrani state after the deduction of his own *zamindari* perquisites (*haquq*). This is well confirmed by the above document which puts the total amount of the realised revenues at Rs. 3,46,800/- for the two crops i.e., *kharif* and *rabi* along with the past arrears. In fact, the annual *peshkash/muamala* (revenues) was fixed periodically and in line with the Mughal practice, was subject to periodical revision.<sup>62</sup> As such, Ala Singh, as the chief *zamindar* (*Zamindar-i-kalan*) had to pay *peshkash/muamala* (revenues) annually to the Durrani Government on periodically fixed basis.

This is well confirmed by the subsequent revenue settlements made with Ala Singh in respect of the *zamindari* territory held by him as landed intermediary and chieftain. After the great disaster (*Wadah Gahllughara*, 1762) and suppression of the Sikhs, Ala Singh was also arrested for having been in connivance with the former and was presented before Ahmad Shah Abdali at Lahore.<sup>63</sup> However, on the intervention of Shah Wali Khan (the *wazir*) who had a soft corner for Ala Singh, the latter was pardoned on the plea that he was a revenue paying chief *zamindar* (*zamindar-i-kalan malguzar*)<sup>64</sup> Ala Singh had, of course, to pay penalty of rupees One lakh and twenty five thousand (Rs. 1,25,000/-). Apart from it, having been reinstated in his *zamindari*, Ala Singh had to pay an amount of Rupees five lakhs (Rs 5,00,000/-) as *malia* which henceforth was fixed as an annual amount (*saliyana*) for payment.<sup>65</sup> Apparently, by 1762 AD, Ala Singh held larger territorial possession of *zamindari* with enhanced revenues than held by him earlier. After the assassination of Zain Khan, the *faujdar* of Sirhind by the Sikhs in his next visit Ahmad Shah Abdali, on the recommendation of Shah Wali Khan (the *wazir*), entrusted the management of *chakla* Sirhind to Ala

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61. *Ibid.*

62. For details, B R. Grover, 'Elements of Continuity and Change in Land Ownership and Rights from the Mughal Age to the Early British Administration in India,' *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Presidential Address, Medieval Section, 37th Session, Calicut, 1976, pp. 143-178.

63. Ali-ud-Din, p. 230.

64. *Ibid.*

65. *Ibid.*

Singh (as *faujdar*) alongwith the bestowal of the title of *rajgi*.<sup>66</sup> In lieu of this, Ala Singh paid rupees six lakhs, which apparently, included both *nazrana* and *malia*. The total amount of the revenues (*jama*) of the entire *chakla* was fixed at rupees eighteen lakhs (Rs. 18,00,000) and Ala Singh was given *sanad* to this effect. This, of course, precluded the *jagir* territories like those of Muhammad Daler Khan, Maler Khan and a few other *taalluqdars* of the cis-Satlej territories who paid the *nazrana/malia* (revenues) directly to the Durrani state.<sup>68</sup> However, after having acquired the *sanad* (for appointment as *faujdar*), Ala Singh fixed the respective amount (of *malia*) to be paid through the latter by the other zamindars i.e. Hamir Singh, Gajpat Singh, Rai Kalan and Desu Singh through mutual settlement. At a later stage, after another campaign while Ahmad Shah Abdali was at Sirhind, Ala Singh paid a personal homage and a fresh settlement of the revenues of *chakla* Sirhind was effected whereby Ala Singh undertook to pay rupees eight lakh (Rs 8,00,000/-) annually as *muamala-i-muqarrari* whereas the other chief zamindars (of the cis-Satlej territories) i.e., Hamir Singh, Desu Singh and Gajpat Singh were assessed at Rupees two lakhs (Rs. 2,00,000/-) each annually and Rai Kalan Jagraon was required to pay rupees four lakh (Rs. 4,00,000/-) annually.<sup>69</sup> Of course, the amount of the

66. *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura*, p. 78. According to the same source, Nawab Najib-ud-Daula proposed the name of Sardar Jahan Khan (as *faujdar*) for the management of administration of *chakla* Sirhind. But this was resented by Shah Wali Khan (the *Wazir*) as the latter was rather on inimical terms with Sardar Jahan Khan. Ala Singh gave rupees six lakhs (Rs. 6,00,000/-) to Shah Wali Khan and was bestowed the title of *rajgi* along with a *sanad* for the management of *chakla* Sirhind (as *faujdar*) by His Majesty (*Huzur-i-Mualla*—Ahmad Shah Abdali). However, *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, p. 62 states that after Ala Singh took over the management of *chakla* Sirhind, he undertook to pay three and a half lakh (Rs. 3,50,000/-) as annual *malguzari* and was bestowed the *khillai* and the title of *rajgi* by Ahmad Shah Abdali. Out of the above amount, Ala Singh paid rupees two lakh and eighty thousand only in cash and thereafter managed to despatch the balance of rupees seventy thousand (Rs. 70,000/-) from Lahore by way of *hundis* to Kabul. This version varies from the above cited evidence known from *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura* which is much earlier source (1823 AD) equally based upon the Archives of the Kunjpura House.

67. *Ibid.*

68. *Ibid.*

69. *Ibid.*, p. 79. As the amount of the revenues (*muamala*) was payable in instalments and as already analysed vide Doc. Op. cit., No. 8 that the periodi-

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*muamala/muamalat* (revenues) was payable in instalments mutually settled by the Durrani administration and the zamindars. As already analysed, it could be paid both in cash and by way of *hundis*. At the same time, the periodically fixed (*muamala-i-muqarrari*) was always subject to revision based upon the actual seasonal assessment of the crops (*fasl ba fasl*) and the revenues realised (*hal-i-hasil*) after having taken into consideration the remissions afforded on account of calamities (*aft*) and the *zamindari* perquisites of Ala Singh and other zamindars mentioned above. Ahmed Shah Abdali received the respective stipulated amounts before he left for Kabul.<sup>70</sup>

Such institutionalised relationship for the payment of periodically fixed *muamala/peshkash* on the part of the Patiala Chiefs (as zamindars) to the Durrani state of Kabul continued during the periods of Maharaja Amar Singh and to a lesser degree even of Raja Sahib Singh all through 18th century. However, at the same time, there is no denying the fact that even during the period of Ahmad Shah Durrani, the Sikh Sardars after successful incursions realised dues in lieu of *karah prasad* (ceremonial sweet *suji prasad* distributed in the *Gurdwaras* at the end of the Prayer) from the Patiala chieftainship (*Zamindari*),<sup>71</sup> the *faujdar*s of *chakla* Sirhind under Durrani rule as well as the Mughal territories of Jamuna-Ganga *doab* (*chakla* Saharanpur).<sup>72</sup> Apart from it, they conti-

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cally fixed *muamala* (*muamala-i-muqarrari*) was equally subject to revision based upon actual assessment (*tashkhis*) and exact amount of the revenues realised (*hal-i-hasil* after deduction on account of calamity (*aft*) and *zamindari* perquisites of various types. It was difficult to determine the amounts of the revenues paid by Ala Singh to the Durrani administration from one year to another. However, *Akhbar* dated 17 *Ramazan* AH 1178/10 March, 1765 AD mentions that as per settlement made at that time, Ala Singh sent rupees forty thousand (Rs. 40,000/-) as *nazrana* to Shah (Ahmad Shah Abdali) and undertook to pay rupees three lakh (Rs. 3,00,000/-) as the revenues (*muamalat*). In this context, it is not clear whether the amount of *muamalat* was only for one season (*fasl-i-rabi*) or the whole past year (inclusive of *fasl-i-kharif*) or only an instalment thereof.

70. *Ibid.*

71. *Akhbar* dated 2 *Shawal*, AH 1177/4 April, 1764 AD; 19 *Shaban* AH 1182/11 February, 1765 AD; 5 *Ramazan* AH 1183/21 January, 1770 AD; also Ali-ud-Din, p. 233.

72. *Akhbar* dated 28 *Zulhijja*, AH 1177/28 June 1764 AD; Also *Persian Records of Maratha History I: Delhi Affairs: (1761-1788) News Letters*. From *Persian Collection*, tr. J.N. Sarkar, Bombay, 1953 (henceforth *Persian Records of Maratha History*), A7—Delhi News Letter, dated 24th January 1770, pp. 19-20.

ually claimed and realised *nazrana muamala* from the territories under the regular Durrani or Mughal administration through negotiated settlement which was usually conceded by the latter administration.<sup>73</sup> At times, the *karah prasad* if fixed as a substantial could well serve the purpose of realisable *nazrana* or *muamala*. In the wake of the sack of Sirhind and the execution of Zain Khan, the *faujdar* of *chakla* Sirhind by the Sikhs (January-February, 1764), the chieftains of Malwa region i.e. Chaudhuri Ala Singh, Gajpat Singh, Mohr Singh, Rai Ahmad Masie, the Afghans of Kotla and the zamindars (chiefs) of Kotkapura and Faridkot having made submission to the Sikhs undertook to pay *nazrana*.<sup>74</sup> Ala Singh paid an amount of rupees twenty five thousand on account of *karah prasad* and occupied *qasba* Sirhind along with a few villages.

In this context, it is essential to appreciate that the *muamala* exacted by the Sikh Sardars from a particular chieftainship/*zamindari* was by no means an exclusive claim over its revenue (*hal-i-hasil*) but formed only a part of the revenues (surplus produce) which otherwise would have gone to the Durrani or the Mughal State, as the case may be.<sup>75</sup> The amount of *muamala* was fixed by the Sikh Sardars taking into consideration the total realised revenues (*hal-i-hasil*) of the subjugated-chieftainship/*zamindari* which was, otherwise, normally under the Durrani or Mughal administration.<sup>76</sup> The Sikh Sardars would realise the fixed *muamala* either as lumpsum or in instalments as settled through negotiations and agreement. Such incursions and claims by the Sikhs continued intermittently all through the later decades of the 18th century over the Durrani held cis-Satlej territories,<sup>78</sup> Muslim *zamindaris* of

73. Of the numerous *Akhbar*, only a few may be cited. *Akhbar*, dated 28 Zulhijja, AH 1176/11 July, 1763 AD; 13 Jumada I, AH 1178/8 November, 1764 AD; 17 Ramazan AH 1178/10 March, 1765 AD; 4 Zulhijja, AH 1181/25 May, 1765 AD; 20 Shawal, AH 1181/10 March, 1768 AD; 20 Zualqada, AH 1182/20 March, 1769 AD; 5 Safar, AH 1183/10 June, 1769 AD; 5 Ramazan, 1183/21 January, 1770 AD; also *Persian Records of Maratha History*, A-10—(Delhi) News Letter to Peshwa, C. 20 May, 1770, p. 23.

74. Ali-ud-Din, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

75. *Ibid*; also *op. cit.*, No. 71.

76. *Op. cit.*, No. 73.

77. *Ibid*. Also National Archives of India (NAI), Sec. Proceedings, Vol. 23 September 1776 AD, pp. 776-777, 781, 783-785; For. Deptt. Sec. Progs., 23 June, 1783, Nos. 23, 42B.

78. For imposition of *rakhi* by the Sikh Sardars see *Akhbar*, dated Jumada 11, A. H.

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*subah* Punjab<sup>79</sup> as well as over the territories of *subah* Multan.<sup>80</sup> Similar is the position with regard to many a region of the Mughal *subahs* of Delhi, Agra and Ajmer.<sup>81</sup> Paradoxically enough, in the medieval Indian polity, even though it was resented or at times opposed by the Durrani or the Mughal Governments, it was by no means considered absolutely incompatible with their own respective claims of sovereignty over these territories.

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- 1193/1779 ; National Archives of India, New Delhi, Original Receipts, Foreign Deptt., Persian Branch, *Akhbar* (henceforth NAI *Akhbar*), OR, 10, pp. 16-18; *Persian Documents*, ed. P. Saran, Bombay, 1966 (henceforth *Persian Documents*, ed. P. Saran), p. 370; *Persian Documents of Maratha History*, A56b—17 April, Second Sheet; 13, 6b—Letters to Nana Sahib Shrimat, C 28th February, 1783, pp. 93 and 119 respectively; *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura*, pp. 93-94, 99-100, 106-107. For realisation of *karah prasad* by the Sikhs, NAI, *Akhbar*, dated—*Rajab* AH 1211/1795-96 AD; *Persian Documents*, ed. P. Saran, p. 401. For realisation of *nazrana/muamala* by the Sikhs, *op. cit.*, Nos. 73 and 76.
79. Of the numerous *Akhbar*, only a few may be cited. *Akhbar* dated 10 *Muharram*, AH 1177/21 July, 1763 AD; 2 *Shawal* AH 1177/4 April, 1764 AD; 28 *Zulqadda* AH 1177/28 June 1764 AD; 21 *Rabi* AH 1183/25 July, 1769 AD; 17 *Rajab* AH 1206/11 March, 1792 AD. For Zaman Shah's period (Date ?), *Akhbarat-i-Wilayat Kabul wa Lahore* vide *Akhbarat-i-Mutafaraq Darbar-i-Mualla* etc., SHR, Khalsa College, Amritsar, Accession No. 521, *Akhbar* No. 20/84, fol. 24a, *Roz Namcha Shah Alam Badshah* (from 31 R.Y. to 49 R.Y.) compiled on 1 June, 1810 AD by Mathan Lal from the material of Rai Tek Chand, the *akhbar-nawis* of the English E.I.Co., Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library, Bankipur, Patna, Ms. No. 174, *Tarikh-i-Farsi Qalimi*, dated 16 *Shaban*, AH 1206, 35th R.Y./30 March, 1797 AD, fols. 68a-b.
80. Only a few instances may be cited. *Akhbar* dated 2 *Shawal* AH 1177/4 April, 1764 AD; 28 *Zulhijja* AH 1177/28 June 1764 AD;—AH 1181/1767-68 AD; 11 *Rabi* I AH/1206/18 November, 1790 AD.
81. Of the numerous instances, only a few may be cited. *Akhbar* dated 5 *Ramazan* AH 1183/21 January 1770 AD, *Persian Records of Maratha History*, A7—Delhi News Letter, 24th January, 1770, pp. 19-20; A10—(Delhi) News Letter to the Peshwa, C 20th May 1770, p. 23; B6b—Letter to Nana Sahib *Shrimant*, 28th Feb., 1783, p. 119. B8a—To the Peshwa, 28 *Jamadi* I. Year 25 (1st May Records Series) ed. 1783), p. 124; Foreign Secreet consultations 23 June Nos. 26-27. Letters from James Browne to John Bristow, Resident at the Wazir's Court dated 2 March, 1783 and 11 March, 1783 respectively; James Browne Correspondence (Indian K.D. Bhargava, NAI, Delhi, 1960, Letters Nos. 24, pp. 33-35; 28, p. 39; 41, pp. 71-82; 55, pp. 114-115; 60, pp. 121-124; 126, pp. 232-34; 127, pp. 235-236; J.N. Sarkar, 'Delhi During the Anarchy, 1749-88 as told in Contemporary Records' with special reference to the Persian manuscript named by Sarkar as the 'Delhi Chronicle,' Indian Historical Records Commission, 1921, pp. 4-9; *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura*, pp. 84-115 ; also Sec. Proceedings vide *op. cit.*, No. 77.

It is equally known from the other sources that Ala Singh also undertook *ijara* (farming of the revenues) from Zain Khan (the *faujdar*) for some of the *parganas* in *chakla* Sirhind,<sup>82</sup> which otherwise were not in his regular *zamindari* jurisdiction. Thus as a *mustajir* (revenue-farmer) he was entitled to margin of stipulated share from the revenues collected and actually paid to the Durrani treasury at Sirhind.

The conferment of the titles of Raja to Ala Singh or *Raja-i-Rajgan* (Maharaja) to Amar Singh was by no means incompatible with the *zamindari* pattern of administration. This only meant recognition of the services rendered by the chiefs to the Durrani State and equally strengthened the institutional bond between them. As such, Timur Shah's *Farman* dated 11 *Rajab* AH 1192/5 August, 1778<sup>83</sup> recognises the services rendered by *Raja-i-Rajgan* Amar Singh to the Durrani royal representative Muhammad Hasan at Patiala and confirms him in possession of *pargana* Tihara which formed part of his *taalluqa* (*zamindari*). As Maharaja Amar Singh acted as the chief zamindar on behalf of the Durrani State, he was directed to oust turbulent Hari Singh (a Sardar of a *misl*) from the cis-Satlej territories and send him to his *watan* around Multan. The *Farman* clearly shows that apart from the Patiala chief, the other Rajas in the cis-Satlej territories equally owed allegiance to the Durrani sovereign. Moreover, in the hierarchical feudal pattern, Maharaja Amar Singh enjoyed a higher status and commanded obedience from some of the other chiefs. This is further confirmed by Timur Shah's *Farman* of even date addressed to Chauhar Singh,<sup>84</sup> who while being confirmed in his past possessions (*talluqa-i-qadim*) extending from *Pargana* Tihara to Bahadaur was equally vested with rights to realise *pahul* cesses (*rasum-i-pahul*). As a zamindar, he is desired not only to owe continued obedience to the Patiala chief but is directed to derive away turbulent Hari Singh towards his *watan* (Multan) with the help of the other Rajas of the territories. The territories (in the cis-Satlej region) in the possession of Hari Singh were seized by the Durrani State and incorporated into the state territories (*dakhil-i-mulk-i-padshahi*) and put under the royal possession (*khalisa*). As such, Chauhar Singh (zamindar) is further directed to help the royal representative Muhammad Hasan in the realisation of the revenues of these territories with the support of the Raja of Patiala (and pass on to the Durrani state treasury). Like

82. *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura*, p. 76.

83. *Op. cit.*, No. 9.

84. *Op. cit.*, No. 10.

the Mughals, the Durrani State equally claimed and exercised the right to decrease or increase or even confiscate the *zamindari* possessions. It was the duty of the chief zamindars to fight against any recalcitrant zamindar on behalf of the state. Here in this case, Chauhar Singh (zamindar) is required to seek the support of the Patiala chief so as to chase even in the Lakhi *jangle* and drive him away to Multan.

It is clear from the above documents that all through the later half of the 18th century, the Durrani State claimed sovereignty and realised revenues from the cis-Satlej territories which was characterised by *zamindari* pattern. The Patiala chieftain as the chief zamindar in lieu of his services and status enjoyed precedence in the hierarchical *zamindari* pattern in *chakla* Sirhind. There is no doubt that at times there was recalcitrance on the part of a few zamindars or Sardars but the Durrani State was able to suppress it through its landed administrative apparatus.<sup>85</sup> It is well confirmed by the Persian Akhbarat as well as by the numismatic evidence that even by the end of the 18th century, the Durrani currency was in vogue in Patiala during the chieftainship of Raja Sahib Singh.<sup>86</sup>

Apart from these documents, the above mentioned Letters (1765-66 AD) addressed by Raja Ala Singh and Raja Amar Singh to the Durrani Prime-Minister, Nawab Shah Wali Khan significantly show that there was regular correspondence between the Patiala chieftain and the Durrani Government. *Dak* (mail) was sent through special messengers (*harkaras*) though, of course, at times mail could be lost in transit due to turbulence *enroute*.<sup>87</sup> The Durrani Government at Kabul was apparently in correspondence with the other chiefs/zamindars in the cis-Satlej territories (*subah* Dehli), Punjab, Multan and Kashmir and kept itself fully informed about the political developments and administrative problems in

85. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 9 and 10.

86. NAI, *Akhbar* dated 16 *Jumada II* AH 1211/17 December, 1796 AD; *Persian Documents*, ed. p. Saran, p. 398. Also Sayyid Imam-ud-Din Husaini, *Tarikh-i-Husain Shahi*, Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library, Bankipur, Patna (written in 1798) states that even till then i.e. 1798 AD, the coin of Shah (Durrani) was current in the family of Amar Singh at Patiala and "whosoever succeeds to the throne issues the same coin in his country and considers himself as a subject of the Durrani Emperor." *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, pp. 75-76. The 18th century currency issued under the Durrani rule is still available in the collection of the coins exhibited at Moti Bagh Palace, Patiala. Also Ganda Singh, *Ahmad Shah Abdali*, *op. cit.*, No. 1, pp. 371-72.

87. *Op. cit.*, No. 15.

these regions all through the second half of the 18th century.

Ala Singh's letters show<sup>88</sup> that by 1765 AD, as chief zamindar and faujdar, he had been entrusted with the administration as well as assessment and realisation of the revenues of *Chakla* Sirhind. Even though he was able to realise revenues (*maliyat*) in these territories, the turbulence on the part of the Sikhs in the Punjab (especially in the Jalandhar *Doab* and *Majiha*) and incursions in the the cis-Satlej region for pillage and plunder rendered his financial position very hard. He states that he was obliged to spend all the realised revenues for administrative purposes, for raising more army, both regular and auxiliary, in order to meet the Sikh challenge. He had to raise loans from the local *sahukars* for this purpose. This position persists with his successor Raja Amar Singh. In such a situation, it is difficult to visualise if annual instalments of *muamalat peshkash* (revenue) could be regularly remitted by the Patiala chiefs to the Durrani Government at Kabul. On the contrary, due to heavy expenditure incurred for recruitment of army in connection with the continual tussle with the Sikhs, both beseech the Durrani Government for magnanimity and royal favour for issue of further *parwanas* (for additional grant of *zamindari* and *jagirs* etc.).<sup>89</sup> Raja Amar Singh claims to have rendered more meritorious services to the Durrani State even that of his grandfather Raja Ala Singh, for having combated the Sikhs and makes persistent appeals for the enhancement of his territorial *zamindari*, *jagirs* and status through the issue of royal *parwanas*.<sup>90</sup>

It is rather significant to state that Letters written by Raja Ala Singh and Raja Amar Singh as faithful zamindars and representatives of the Durrani State not only uphold the legitimacy of the Durrani sovereignty in the Punjab and the cis-Satlej territories but are equally couched in traditional tone representing the royal authority. During the medieval age, in the official communications representing the Imperial Government, the adversaries were usually mentioned with contempt and the adjectives used for them were rather derogatory in character. Such a tenor of writing is equally reflected in the chronicles especially while narrating the campaigns against the people of the enemy territories or recalcitrant chiefs or tribes. Both Raja Ala Singh and Raja Amar Singh describe the large groups or troops of the Sikhs as 'contemptible' (*amboh-i-groh-i-nakbat pizhuh*) or 'large number of wretched infidel troops (Sikhs)

88. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 12 and 13.

89. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 13, 14, 18.

90. *Op. cit.*, No. 15.



designed to be vanquished (*groh-i-amboh-i-moghurran shaqwat pizhu*) or 'vanquishable infidels' (*maqhurran, jama-i-maqhur* or *jamiur-i maqhur*) or the 'wretched assembled troops' (*jama-i-nakbat*) or 'multitude of the Sikh troops—the infidels destined to be vanquished' (*ma'al jamai Sikhian shakwat nishan*) or the 'contemptible and infidel armies destined for utter destruction' (*maqahir nakbat*) 'mean', 'vagrants', 'rioters' and 'impious group'.<sup>91</sup> In fact, both Raja Ala Singh and Raja Amar Singh consider such Durrani territories of the Punjab which were occupied by the recalcitrant Sikhs as having been defiled and rendered impious and could be made pious only after successful Durrani campaigns.<sup>92</sup>

The above correspondence on the part of Raja Ala Singh and Raja Amar Singh with the Durrani Prime-Minister as well as other contemporary documents reveal that while narrating the incursions of the Sikhs (*Sikhian*) or Singhs (*Singhan*) in their territories (*chakla* Sirhind), they used these terms (*Sikhian/Singhan*) with utter contempt and derogatory shiboleths. It is doubtful that they were using this language merely with a view to please their Durrani masters. It rather suggests that in the 18th century, the term Sikh or a group of Sikhs did not essentially connote persons belonging to a particular religious faith as both Raja Ala Singh and Raja Amar Singh were the followers of the Gurus and had been even baptized after performance of the ceremony of *Pahul*.<sup>93</sup> It seems in the context that the Sikhs or *Singhan* denoted those militant followers of the *Nanak Panth* and Guru Gobind Singh who had taken to arms against the Mughal state or the Durrani Government for the vindication of their religious rights and temporal power. As a matter of fact, ever since the creation of the *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh (April, 1699), the militant groups of the Sikhs emerged as a vital force during the first half of the 18th century which undermined the traditional Mughal administrative institutions and polity in the Punjab and cis-Satlej territories. They formed themselves into small *jathas* (armed bands), *grohs*

91. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 13-15, 17, 19.

92. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 13, 17. It is also known from the *Akhbarat* that Raja Ala Singh had been frequently writing to Ahmad Shah Abdali for undertaking further campaigns in the Punjab for the suppression of the Sikhs. *Akhbar* dated 3 *Rabi* II AH 1177/11 October, 1763 AD states that Ala Singh had sent letters to Ahmad Shah Abdali requesting him to come to Lahore so that they might uproot the *thanas* established by the Sikhs in the Doaba (Jalandhar).

93. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, pp. 58, 65; Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Jassa Singh Binod* (Punjabi) P.S.A., Patiala, Ms. 772, fols. 241a-b; also Ram Sukh Rao, *Sri Fateh Singh Pratap Prabhakar*, ed. Joginder Kaur, Patiala, 1980, pp. 171, 211, 474.

(mobile warrior bands) and *dals* under the command of the Sardars rather freedom fighters. The invasion of Nadir Shah (1739) and subsequent campaigns of Ahmad Shah Abdali (1748 onwards) not only gave a blow to the Mughal Empire but created a political vacuum which equally accelerated the phenomenal growth of the militant Sikhs who during the second half of the 18th century established institutionalised economic and territorial interests as well as chieftancies based on hierarchical, pattern. For the furtherance of their interests, both for defence and offence, many a Sardar would combine on an *ad hoc* basis under the command of one of the Chief Sardars which constituted the *Dal Khalsa*.<sup>94</sup> As such in the contemporary terminology, the Sikhs/*Sikhan*/*Singhan* who confronted the Mughal/Durrani states can be well distinguished from other denominational Hindu Sects who, even though, claimed to be the followers of the Gurus and *Nanak Panth* rather remained passive and usually pursued peaceful vocations.<sup>95</sup>

Even though the Persian *Akbarat* and other sources do provide a general and piecemeal information about the activities of the Sikhs in the Punjab and the cis-Satlej territories the above mentioned Letters of Raja Ala Singh and Raja Amar Singh offer most detailed description of some of the campaigns and incursions of the Sikhs in the cis-Satlej and Haryana territories (*subah* Delhi) during the crucial year following the

94. Of the numerous available *Akhbar*, only a few may be cited. *Akhbar* dated 28 *Zulhijja*; AH 1177/28 June, 1764 AD; 30 *Jumada I*, AH 1178/25 November, 1764 AD; 25 *Jumada II*, AH 1182/6 November, 1768 AD; NAI, *Akhbar* No. 160, OR, 10, p. 3, 12 February, 1785 AD; *Persian Documents*, ed. P. Saran, pp. 363-68; *Persian Records of Maratha History*, A3b—10th December, 1766. Sheet 2, News about Sikh Sardars b.6; *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura*, pp. 87-94.
95. For the first half of the 18th century, numerous *Akhbar* mention the *Banjara* communities, the *Kaiyasths*, *Gujars*, *Hindu faqirs*, *sunyasis* and *bairagis* as the followers of *Nanak Panth*. See *Akhbar* dated 10 *Ramazan*, AH 1123, 5th R.Y.B.S./11 October, 1711 AD; 12 *Rajab* AH, 4th R.Y.F.S./3 July, 1715 AD; 16 *Jumada I*, AH 1122, 4th R.Y.B.S./2 July, 1710 AD; For the *Udaseen* as *Nanak Prasth* around the middle century, See *Tazkira Waqai Anand Ram Mukhlis*, (1746-48 A.D.), SHR, Khalsa College, Amritsar, Ms. Acc. No. 94, pp. 131-59. The *Nanak Shahi deras* and *maths* came to be established in various parts of North India. For philosophical aspects and popularity of *Udaseen*, see Sant Rein, *Udasi Bodh*, Ms. (1858 AD), fols. 1a-320b, History Deptt., G.N.D. University, Amritsar—a xerox copy of the original text available at *Dera Sant Rein*, village Bhudan, District Sangrur (Punjab); also Surjit Singh Hans, 'Early Sikh Tradition,' *Journal of Regional History*, History Department, GNDU, Vol. I, 1980, p. 185.

defeat and disaster of the Sikh Sardars (*wadh ghallughara*) in the battle at Kup (1762) at the hands of Ahmad Shah Abdali.<sup>96</sup> They equally bring out the issues involved in the internecine conflict between Raja Amar Singh and his younger brother Himmat Singh over the Patiala *gaddi* and the partition of the *jagirs*. The detailed narration of the connivance of Himmat Singh with the Sikh Sardars of *Doaba* and *Majiha* for incursions in the *zamindari mahals* of the Patiala House and other territories of *chakla* Sirhind, even temporary occupation of some of the *mahals* by Himmat Singh and the Sikh Sardars as well as the battles fought by the contending parties is not available in any of the other contemporary sources.<sup>97</sup> As such, they considerably help in the reconstruction of the 18th century history of the Patiala Chieftainship, both internally and externally with regard to its relationship with the Sikh Sardars and the Durrani State at Kabul.

Written from the Imperial administrative angle, the ascribed motivation on the part of the Sikh Sardars for incursions in *chakla* Sirhind and other cis-Satlej territories is turbulence, pillage, plunder and devastation of the royal Durrani territories. In fact, such a medieval terminology implies the temporary forcible occupation of the villages/*mahals/zamindari*s wherein the Sikh Sardars equally illegally realised the revenues of Patiala chieftains and other Sirhind territories. The Letters refer to the atrocities and calamity wrought by the Sikh Sardars in *chakla* Sirhind, the Jat territories (of Bharatpur) and the regions around Delhi.<sup>98</sup>

96. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 13-15, 17-19.

97. *Op. cit.*, No. 15. 17-19. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, pp. 66-67 refers to the same letter addressed by Maharaja Amar Singh to Shah Wali Khan. However, a *kaifiyat* (Date ?) available at P.S.A., Patiala, No. A. 8. H mentions another incident dated approximately 1829 *Samvat/1772* AD when Kanwar Himmat Singh supported by Bhai Desu Singh and some forces of the Sikhs (*Singhan*) occupied the fort of Patiala when Maharaja Amar Singh had gone to the *jungle* side (for game). According to this *kaifiyat*, Maharaja Amar Singh supported by the other Rajas, the Phulkian Sardars, Raja Kirat Parkash (of Kangra) and the Afghans of Malerkotla besieged the fort and after reconciliation with Himmat Singh reoccupied the city and fort of Patiala. In this settlement, Himmat Singh did not get anything excepting his own *Zamindari (makan)* as such returned to Dathoda (Dhoda). After about five to six months, he was taken ill and died. All the *jagir* and *zamindari*s (*makanat*) of Himmat Singh were occupied by Maharaja Amar Singh. The above *kaifiyat* was copied from the old documents and recorded on 22 *Poh* 1981/1924 AD under the caption *muqadma parcha-i-tarikh-i-halat-i-Patiala*.

98. *Op. cit.*, No. 15; of the numerous other sources, only a few may be cited. *Akhar* dated 28 *Zulhijja*, AH 1177/28 June, 1764 AD; *Tarikh-i-Kunjapura* pp. 87-115; also *op. cit.*, No. 81.

#### AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEMPORARY DURRANI REVENUE DOCUMENTS

The Letters do not refer to any religious motivation on the part of the Sikhs. However, on the contrary, the contemplated annihilation of the Sikhs by the Durrani forces with the 'ominous sword of Islam' and the desired Durrani success is considered as 'the victory of Islam' over the turbulent Sikhs<sup>99</sup> Notwithstanding such traditional medieval verbiage the Letters do provide insight into the motivation of incursions by the Sikh Sardars in the territories of *chakla* Sirhind. A few statements in the Letters categorically mention the territorial acquisitions (and their revenues) as the main object of incursions on the part of the Sikh Sardars.<sup>100</sup> Both Raja Ala Singh and Raja Amar Singh claim to have combated the combined forces of many a Sikh Sardar and after having defeated them pushed them out of their territories.<sup>101</sup> However, during Amar Singh's period, the situation was rather critical because of the conflict between him and his younger brother Himmat Singh who also commanded the support of a few local zamindars. Himmat Singh helped by Heimer Singh was also in league with the Sikh Sardars (of the Punjab), in the furtherance of the latter's designs over the Sirhind territories.<sup>102</sup> The Sikh Sardars were able to establish their military posts (thanas) on the outskirts as well as in the territories of *chakla* Sirhind and even temporarily occupied some of the *mahals* and *zamindari*s therein (for the realisation of the revenues).<sup>103</sup> But they were eventually pushed back by Raja Amar Singh. In fact, the above Letters cover a period for only two years (1765-66 AD) along with background of the preceding years for the activities of the Sikhs in *chakla* Sirhind. It is known from other sources that there were brief phases, both earlier and later than these years, when the Sikhs (*Dal Khalsa*) especially under the supreme command of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia were able to intermittently realise *muamala* (revenues) from the Patiala chieftain as well as the local Durrani administration at Sirhind.<sup>104</sup> They even imposed *rakhi* over

99. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 15, 17, 19.

100. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 15, 17-19.

101. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 13-15, 17-19.

102. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 15, 17-19.

103. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 18-19.

104. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 73, 77-78, also *Akhbar* dated 4 *Jamadi* II, AH 1206/29 January, 1792 AD; 17 *Rajab* AH 1206/11 March, 1792 AD. In fact, earlier Raja Ala Singh Jat was obliged to surrender 1/4th of the revenues of the *pargana* Issru and then the entire latter *pargana* as well as the *pargana* Kotla Maler to Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the leader of the *Dal Khalsa*, Cf. *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, pp, 74-75.

many a village in the cis-Satlej territories.<sup>105</sup> But in the last decades of the 18th century, the Durrani administration supported by the Mughals or the Mughals-Maratha operations, exerted greater pressure over the local Sikh Sardars in the cis-Satlej territories and was able to maintain its sovereign rights over *chakla* Sirhind till the end of the 18th century.<sup>106</sup> It is only the English East India Company which eventually ousted the Durrani influence and established its own protectorate over the chieftains of the cis-Satlej territories by the early 19th century.<sup>107</sup> Of course, the Durrannies were ousted root and branch from the *subahs* of Lahore, Multan and Kashmir by Maharaja Ranjit Singh from the closing years of the

105. *Op. cit.*, No. 78.

106. *Op. cit.*, Nos. 9-10; *Akhbar* dated 3 *Rajab* AH 1193/17 July, 1779 AD; 5 *Shabban*, AH 1193/18 August, 1779 AD; 8 *Rabi* I, AH 1195/4 March, 1781 AD; NAI *Akhbar*, No. 101, OR 449, 5 September 1787 AD, pp. 231-35; *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura*, pp. 87-90, 94-99, 101-115; also *op. cit.*, No. 86.

107. It was only after the British occupation of Delhi (11 September, 1803 AD) and the withdrawals of Marathas from the Jamuna-Ganges Doab and the Delhi-Agra region along the Jamuna in pursuance of the Anglo-Maratha Treaty of Surji-Arjan Gaon (30 December, 1803 AD), and the failure of Jaswant Rao Holkar's assault on Delhi (October 8, 1804 AD) and later futile negotiations for eliciting support from the Chiefs of the cis-Satlej territories and Maharaja Ranjit Singh (of Punjab) that the English East India Company penetrated into the cis-Satlej territories for the establishment of its Protectorate. All this is confirmed by the NAI Pol. Progs. for these years. In fact, as late as 1804 AD, Zaman Shah, the King of Kabul was in correspondence with Begum Samru (of Sardhana) for asserting his sovereignty vis a vis the English East India Company. Begum Samru received three letters from Kabul in this regard, which, she forwarded to Col. Ochterlony, the E. I. Co's Resident at Delhi : (Begum to Col. Ochterlony, dated 23.2.1804 vide Sec. Progs. 12.4.1804, No. 64). For details of Lord Lake's military operation and submission of the Chiefs in the cis-Satlej territories as well as that of Jaswant Rao Holkar, see *Roz Namcha Shah Alrm*, *op.cit.*, No. 79, dated 24 *Jamada* II AH 1220, 48 R.Y./20 September, 1805 AD; 16 *Rajab* AH 1220 48 R.Y./12 October, 1805 AD; 17 *Ramazan* AH 1220, 48 R.Y./ 10 December 1805 AD; 27 *Shawal* AH 1220, 48 R.Y./19 January 1806 AD (This *roz namcha* relates to Patiala), fols. 550a-552b, also P.S.A., Patiala, Doc. No. 144, Original Letter (in Persian) addressed by Mr. Seton, Resident, Delhi to Maharaja Sahib Singh about the protection of their territories by the British Government, as intimated to Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Lahore. Dated 21 November, 1808 AD; also *Tarikh-i-Kunjpura*, pp. 112-115.

18th century to second decade of the 19th century (1799-1819).<sup>108</sup>

108. Zaman Shah led his last campaign to Lahore on 19 *Rajab*, AH 1213/19 September, 1798 AD but had to retreat towards Multan due to shortage of funds (Cf. *Roz Namcha Shah Alam* fols. 298b-299a). Notwithstanding the fact that the Sikhs were a great barrier to the fulfilment of the Durrani aims for the reoccupation of the territories of the Punjab and cis-Satlej upto Karnal over which it claimed sovereignty (Cf. Sheikh Rahim Ali, *Tarikh-i-Manazil-i-Kabul* written in AH 1211/1797 AD and recompiled by Abdul Qadir Khan in AH 1212/1798 AD, Regional Archives Office, Allahabad (U.P.). Ms. No 12842, Question/Answer No. 22—henceforth *Turikh-i-Manazil-i-Kabul*, the English East India Company was also keeping strict watch over the Durrani designs (Cf. *Roz Namcha Shah Alam*, dated 14 *Rajab*, 41 R.Y./25 December, 1798 AD, fols. 299a-b). By the end of the 18th century, the Durrani still realised *peskash/nazrana* from many a Hindu chiefs of the Sub-Himalayan ranges (Chamba, Jammu etc.) as well as from the territories of *Chach*, Hazara and even at times from the *zamindaries* and *mahals* of the Gakkhars and Khataks of the regions between Jehlum and Sind and from many other Muslim Chiefs in West Punjab. (Cf. *Roz Namcha Shah Alam* dated 16 *Shaban*, AH 1206, 35 R.Y./30 March, 1793; *Tarikh-i-Manazil-i-Kabul*, Questions/Answers, Nos. 4, 14, 21, 22; also B.R. Grover, 'Relationship between the Sovereign State (the Mughals and Afghans) and Punjab Hill Chiefs during the 17th and 18th Centuries. A case study of Chamba Chieftainship based on Bhuri Singh Museum, Chamba Documents, 'Nuskha-i-Insha-i Majmua al Qawanin', Punjab History Conference, 16th Session, March, 1982, Patiala, pp. 94-102 and 21st Session, March 1987, pp. 138-150 respectively. Apart from the Punjab, the Durrani equally claimed revenues from the *Subah* of Multan, the Blochs and the territories West of (river) the Indus (Cf. *Roz Namcha Shah Alam* dated 9 *Rajab*, AH 1213, R.Y. 41/19 December, 1798 AD, fols. 298b-299a; 20 *Safar*, AH 1214, R.Y. 41/25 July, 1799, fols 335b-336a; 8 *Zilqadda* AH 1214, R.Y. 42/3 April, 1800 AD, fols. 369b-370a; also *Tarikh-i-Manazil-i-Kabul*, Question/Answers Nos. 4, 13-14. After having occupied Lahore in 1799 AD, Ranjit Singh realised that he could never consolidate his rule unless the Afghans were expunged from all the above territories. As such, he conquered Multan (January, 1818), Peshawar (November, 1818) and Kashmir (July, 1819). The real credit for stamping out the Afghan rule from the Indian territories goes only to Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

## Patiala State Mint and Nazrana Coins

SURINDER SINGH\*

The rulers of cis-Sutlej states belong to Sidhu Jat clan, and take their ancestry to Jessel, the Bhatti Rajput who founded Jesalmer city and state during 12th century A. D. One of the descendents of the Sidhu Jat was Phul, after whom the Phulkian states are named and was blessed by Guru Hargobind. As the story goes, once Kala Jat took his two nephews including Phul to the Guru, making them press their stomachs as if from hunger. On Guru's asking, Kala stated that they were starving. Guru Horgobind stated that not to speak of the hunger of one belly, they shall satisfy the hunger of thousands. He also blessed Phul, that his name shall be a true omen and shall bear many blossoms.<sup>1</sup>

Phul's grandson Ala Singh became the chief on his father's murder in 1716. In a couple of years, he was able to avenge his father's murder, consolidate his position and took up his residence at Barnala in 1720, which had to be virtually rebuilt. Ala Singh further consolidated his position by subduing neighbouring chiefs and annexing Sanaur (Sanaur) and other adjoining areas. He founded Patiala and built a mud fort there in 1753. By 1757, he was able to defeat Abdul Samad Khan of Sirhind and neighbouring Bhatti chiefs and was looked upon as one of the rising Sikh chiefs. Ala Singh was a Sikh chief, who fought battles against the Muslims as well as the Sikhs, he joined the Sikhs against the Muslims when it suited him. He accepted the suzerainty of the Mughals and Afghans when it was in his interest to do so. In fact, his religious fervor was greatly tempered by his political sagacity and avoidance of an unequal fight with the Afghans. Ala Singh's submissions to Ahmad Shah invariably created a reaction against him amongst the Malwa Sikh chiefs, but he was always able to pacify the Dal Khalsa through the good offices of his friend Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.<sup>2</sup>

Ala Singh had three confrontations with the Afghans during Ahmad

\*2119, Sector 15-C, Chandigarh.

1. L.H. Griffin, *Rajas of Punjab* (1870) reprint Language Dept., Patiala, 1970 p. 6,
2. Hari Ram Gupta, *Evolution of Sikh Confederacies*, Delhi, 1978. pp. 162, 220.

#### PATIALA STATE MINT AND NAZRANA COINS

Shah Abdali's invasions of India. In March 1761, when Ahmad Shah reached Sirhind, Ala Singh presented himself with costly gifts and promised to pay an annual tribute. Ahmad Shah received him warmly and awarded a role of honour or *khilat*. He also directed the Governor of Sirhind to consider Ala Singh's possessions as separate from his territories.<sup>3</sup> The Sikhs who hated the Mughals had no love for the Afghans. In fact, they had their own ambitions and could not resist the temptation of looting the baggage train of Ahmad Shah and harassing his troops on their return. As soon as Ahmad Shah turned his back, the Sikhs started ravaging Punjab and defeated his army sent under Nur-ud-Din and occupied Lahore. Ahmad Shah made his 6th invasion in February 1762 and in a pitched battle killed about 20,000 Sikhs near Kup. Ala Singh who had vacillated in fighting for the Sikhs was arrested. He was released on payment of a ransom, and promised to pay an annual tribute. But as soon as Abdali turned his back, the Sikhs again started harassing his governors and looting their territories. In early 1774 the Sikhs reached Sirhind, killed Zain Khan, pulled down the fort and named the place Fatehgarh.<sup>4</sup> Abdali in his seventh invasion in December 1764—March 1765 saw Sirhind in total ruin. Ala Singh presented himself with costly presents and sought the governorship of Sirhind. Ahmad Shah realising the inability of Muslim governors to resist the Sikh attacks, conferred on Ala Singh, a *khilat*, kettle drums, banners and installed him as an independent chief of Sirhind for an annual subsidy of three and a half lakhs.<sup>5</sup> Ala Singh died soon thereafter on 22 August, 1765. He was succeeded by his grandson Amar Singh. In March, 1767, Ahmad Shah again reached Sirhind and called for Amar Singh and after receipt of tribute granted him a role of honour, subedari of Sirhind and a superlative title of *Raja-e-Rajagan*.<sup>6</sup>

With the confirmation of subedari of Sirhind, the ruler of Patiala was authorised to mint Durrani coins as it is a privilege which belongs to independent chiefs. There is, however, a difference of opinion amongst the historians as to whether coins were struck in 1765 by Ala Singh or in 1767 by Amar Singh. Gen. R.C. Taylor, the agent to the Lt. Governor

3. *Ibid.*, p. 161.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 220.

6. H.R. Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 244; Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 37; Temple, *Indian Antiquary*, Cal. Nov. 1889 pp. 323-24; J. D. Cunningham, *History of Sikhs*, Delhi, 1962, p. 101.



of cis-Sutlej States, carried out a study of the cis-Sutlej States' coinage in 1869 at the instance of Foreign Secretary to the then Government of India. This study has been relied upon by Graffin in *Rajas of Panjab*<sup>7</sup> 1870 and Patiala State Note on Patiala Currency.<sup>8</sup>

The mint of Patiala is said to have been established by the order of Ahmad Shah Durrani, when Patiala State was ruled by Maharaja Amar Singh. Patiala rupee is known as *Raja Shahi* rupee. It is three fourth of an inch in diameter and weighs  $11\frac{1}{4}$  *mashas*. It is of pure silver. The coin is really five *rattis* less in weight than the British Government rupee, but the amount of actual silver in each is the same, and consequently the Patiala rupee fetches the full 16 *annas*, but is subjected sometimes to arbitrary discount by the bankers (*sarafs*) in British territory. Its value fluctuates with the value of silver in the markets, fetching in this way sometimes more than 16 annas. The Patiala gold *mohar* weighs  $10\frac{3}{4}$  *mashas* and is of pure gold. No copper coins were struck in Patiala.<sup>9</sup> 'Patiala State Note' states the silver rupee to be weighing  $11\frac{1}{8}$  *mashas*.<sup>10</sup>

The inscription on the coins both gold and silver is the same

Obverse

حکم شہ از قادر بیچوں با احمد بادشاہ -  
سکہ زن بر سکہ و زر از اوج مہی تا سماہ -

Reverse

جلوس میمنت با نوس ضرب سر ہند -

*Hukm shud az Qadir-i-bechun ba Ahmad Badshah  
Sikka zan bar seem-o-zar az auj-i-mahi ta ba mah  
Jalus Meimnat Manus-Zarb Sirhind.*

The translation of which is : "The order of God, the peerless, to Ahmad Badshah : strike coin on silver and gold from earth to heaven. In the presence of favoured of high fortune, the Sirhind coinage."

7. Griffin, *op. cit.*, 286.

8. Note on Patiala Currency, Appendix A.

9. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

10. See Appendix A.

## PATIALA STATE MINT AND NAZRANA COINS

The inscription being long and the coin small, only a small portion of the legend has come on the coin.



The above is the impression of the die used in the above coinage.<sup>11</sup>

Two persons viz. R.C. Taylor in 1869 and R.C. Temple in 1889 have carried out a somewhat detailed study of the Patiala coinage. Taylor states that the coins were first minted by Maharaja Amar Singh in 1767, whereas Temple forcefully argues that the same was actually minted by Ala Singh in 1765. Taylors' statement is shared by the Patiala State Government note on Patiala coinage giving the date as 1767, when Amar Singh was given the title of *Raja-e-Rajagan*.<sup>12</sup> Hari Ram Gupta has also mentioned a passage from Husain Shahi page 86. "The Coin of the Shah is current in the family of Amar Singh at Patiala, whoever succeeds to the throne issues the same coin in his country and considers himself as a subject of the Durrani emperor."<sup>13</sup> Husain Shahi account was written in 1798 within about thirty years of the issue of the coinage and there being no mention of Ala Singh and specific mention of Amar Singh shows that coinage started in 1767. The note of Patiala State does not throw any further light thereon and cannot be viewed as a further supporting evidence. Taylor has come across another reference in Patiala report about the date of coinage as 1820 San.bat, i.e., 1763 AD but he has not accepted the same. Historically also the date 1763 seems to be incorrect.<sup>14</sup>

R.C. Temple in his study of coins of modern native chiefs of Panjab, states "In the year AH 1164, or AD 1751, being the fourth year of his reign the famous Ahmad Shah Abdali made a raid into the Panjab and over-ran greater part of it, and it is common historical statement that in that year he granted to the chiefs of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and

11. R.C. Temple, *Indian Antiquary*, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

12. See Appendix A.

13. Hari Ram Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

14. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

Malekoti the right to mint coins within their respective states.<sup>15</sup> With the exception of Nabha in later years, these states never changed the legend, the date or the mint name, the dies have been cut and recut over and over again but no material change has taken place beyond adding, in some cases only, the mark or sign of the particular chief issuing the coinage. R.C. Temple states that Ala Singh had finally destroyed and annexed the great Muhamadan provincial capital of Sirhind, and was made chief of the whole of this district by Ahmad Shah. The right to coining given by Ahmad Shah to the Phulkian states was therefore clearly given in his time and certain coins are universally attributed by the local bankers (*mahajans, sarafs*) to him, his mark being the *kalghi* or aigrette plume. Temple disputes Graffin's account (based on Taylor's report) that coins were first struck by Amar Singh in 1767, on the testimony of local bankers with whom he had discussion.<sup>16</sup> He further argues that Griffin, quoting official documents, says that Amar Singh established the Patiala mint and was the first to coin rupees: "In fact in another place in the Patiala reports Sambat 1820 (AD 1763) is mentioned as the year." But Amar Singh did not succeed till 1765, and thought it is quite possible that in minting the first coin, an old die (i.e., of the year 4) and not a current coin (i.e., of the year 14 or 16) of Ahmad Shah was taken as the sample, yet the Patiala and indeed all the Punjab rupees bear the date 'Jalus' the year 4 i.e., AD 1751. Either date 1751 or 1763 falls within Ala Singh's reign. So I agree with the native bankers in saying that Ala Singh initiated the currency.<sup>17</sup> He further states that "at Patiala I found officials knew very little, but that the bankers know a great deal...it seems to me hardly possible that the bankers could err on so recent a coinage."

R.C. Temple is wrong in reading the figure 4 which is in fact a short form of emphasis as may be seen from the coins.<sup>18</sup> These coins do not give any date as such to establish the date of coinage in Patiala immediately on Ala Singh being conferred the independent chieftainship of Sirhind, he had to fight a battle with the Sikhs and could secure peace with the Dal Khalsa with the intervention of his friend Jassa Singh Ahluwalia. He had also to accompany Ahmad Shahto Lahore and on

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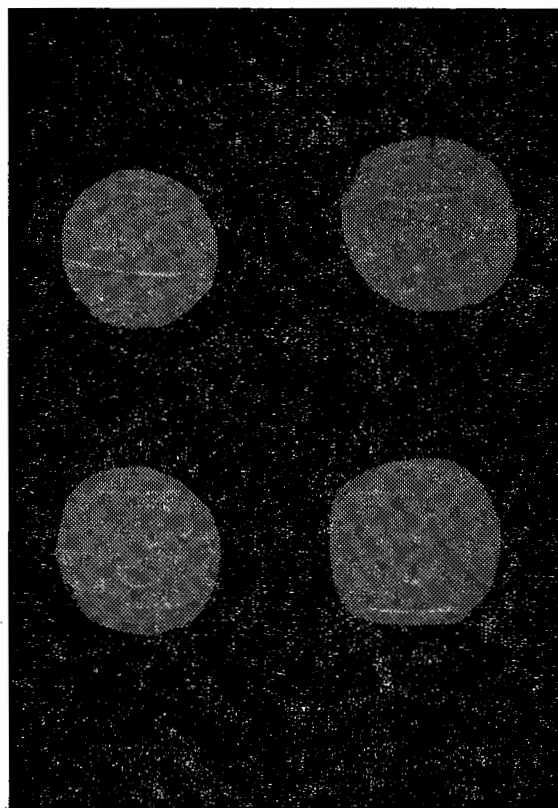
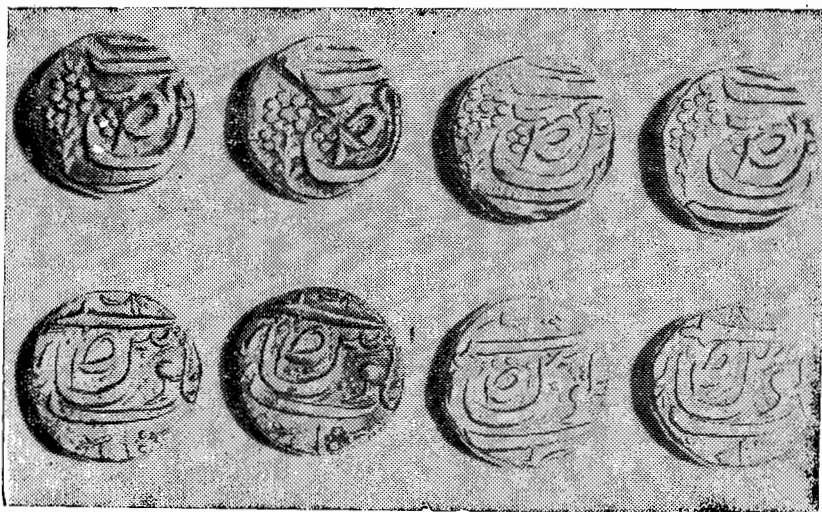
15. R.C. Temple *op. cit.*, pp. 321-22.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 324.

17. *Ibid.* p. 325.

18. Photographs of the reverse of a few representative coins.

PATIALA STATE MINT AND NAZRANA COINS



return had fallen sick and died on August 22, 1765.<sup>19</sup> It also stands to reason that he could not have issued two sets of coins in this short spell from March to August 1765. It has, of course, been stated that coins were first minted by Ala Singh but no specific evidence in support thereof is forthcoming.<sup>20</sup> Hence we agree with the view that coins were struck in Patiala under Maharaja Amar Singh in 1767 unless some clear evidence to the contrary comes to light and not mere reliance on unknown bankers.

There is difference of opinion between Patiala State note and Temple's account over the distinctive marks of the Patiala rulers shown as under :—

- (i) Raja Ala Singh 1729 to 1765 A.D., 36 years. Temple's statement that he minted coins with *kalghi* mark in 1765 are disputed by others.
- (ii) Raja Amar Singh 1765 to 1781 A. D., 16 years; his mark as *kalghi* is not disputed.
- (iii) Maharaja Sahib Singh 1781 to 1813 A.D., 32 years; whereas Temple states his mark to be *kalghi*, Patiala State note calls it two edged sword.
- (iv) Maharaja Karam Singh 1813 to 1845 A.D., 32 years; Temple states his mark to be a *saif* two handed sword whereas Patiala State note calls it as "shamsher" which means a sword.
- (v) Maharaja Narinder Singh 1845 to 1862 A.D., 17 years; Temple states his mark as spear head whereas Patiala State note states the same as *kattar*.
- (vi) Maharaja Mohinder Singh 1862 to 1876 A. D., 14 years; Temple calls his mark as halberd head whereas Patiala state note calls it dagger.
- (vii) Maharaja Rajinder Singh 1876 to 1900 A. D., 24 years; Temple calls his mark as *katar* whereas Patiala state note is silent.<sup>21</sup>

The mint was supervised by a Superintendent, a *mohurrir*, two testers, one weigher, 10 blacksmiths, 2 coiners, 4 refiners of metal and one engraver. The metals are refined carefully and brought to the standard

19. Mohd. Latif, *History of Punjab* (1890) reprint, Ludhiana, 1989, p. 327.

20. See for instance Gurbachan Singh, "Polity of Ala Singh" *Proceedings Punjab History Conference*, Patiala, March, 1971, pp. 140-41.

21. R.C. Temple, *op. cit.*, p. 325. Appendix A.

## PATIALA STATE MINT AND NAZRANA COINS

of gold and silver kept as specimen in the mint. The metal brought by private parties is coined at the rate of rupees 24 per 100 gold coins and 1 rupee 1 anna per 100 silver coins out of which about two third went to the state and rest as establishment and miscellaneous charges. Although the Patiala State could strike 2000 coins per day, in actual practice the striking of the coins was done on special occasions or when actually required.<sup>22</sup> The currency was generally confined to the area of the state, but it was also used in the neighbouring areas.

The Patiala currency started depreciating in Raja Sahib Singh's time and this depreciation went on till in 1892, when the minting of Patiala coins was stopped. In the year 1893, Government of India stopped striking of silver rupees in thier mints and had directed the native states on November 20, 1893 not to coin silver rupees for six months, in order to avoid fluctuations in the exchange rate of their coins. The Patiala State had already closed their mint, primarily due to its steep depreciation and adopted the Government of India rupee as legal tender.<sup>23</sup> During regime of Maharaja Rajinder Singh from 1933 Sambat to 1949 Sambat i.e., 1876 to 1892 A.D. 45,498.67 rupees were coined before the closing of the mint which comes to about 2½ lakhs per annum and about 125 days annuals load for the state mint.<sup>24</sup>

Efforts were made to remodel the Patiala mint on various occasions with a view to increase its revenue as well as to enhance the state prestige and bring it at par with other native states having their own coinage. But these exercises were finally dropped primarily due to financial restraints. Various such attempts are mentioned in the note regarding Patiala currency. The first attempt was made in 1851 at the Viceregal Darbar to change the Abdali legend to that of Queen Victoria<sup>25</sup>

In 1914, another attempt was made to resurrect the state mint. Comparative study of Alwar and Bikaner currency was made who were getting their coins minted at Govt. of India mints and their rupee was legal tender throughout British India. About two lakhs annual income was also calculated but no final action was taken.<sup>26</sup> Another futile

22. Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

23. See Appendix A.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 13. Temple in his account at p. 334 states that in 1857, Patiala very nearly succeeded in ousting its old coinage with modern English rupee on the lines Alwar State adopted later on.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

attempt was made in 1919 and the latest reference thereon is dated 13 June 1922 and thereafter no action has been taken to revive the Patiala mint.<sup>27</sup>

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh ruled Patiala from 1900 to 1938. His life style was very lavish and extravagant and the state was in perpetual financial difficulties. He was a large hearted ruler who desired to do everything in an unmatched regal style. He was most adept in keeping the British authorities in good humour by his loyalty, extravagant entertainments and assistance in war efforts. The British rulers ignored his draw-backs, but had to place a financial expert Sir Fredrich Gaunttet Ex-Accountant General as his finance minister to restore the fast decaying economy of the state.<sup>28</sup> He was very fond of celebrating Dussehra and Diwali festivals in regal style and used to offer gold and silver coins in *puja* and distribute to his household and the state officials. The exact date of their start could not be ascertained due to complete record not readily forthcoming from Punjab State Archives. The tradition of distribution of *nazrana* coins continued even after his death by Maharaja Yadavindra Singh. Being the most important Sikh ruler after the fall of Lahore Darbar, the Abdali legend was dropped and Sikh legend was taken on these coins. These coins in Government correspondence have been called "Guru Sahib coins."<sup>29</sup> Regular correspondence exists over the assessment of the requirement by Sardar Sahib Deodhi Mualla. Tenders were called for from the various srafs, and by and large the work of minting these coins was awarded to Bajramal Bhagirath Mal and Ch. Abdul Hakim, who were perhaps the leading sarafs.<sup>30</sup> The coins which remain undistributed were melted and recast as "the coins once used in *puja* by the august master could not be used again according to the injunctions of the shastras." The last such correspondence which has been examined pertains to 1943.

There are with the Sheesh Mahal Museum, Patiala about a dozen gold coins and about 1500 silver coins (specimen given in the plate attached). Recently a thorough examination of the large quantity of Sikh coins in Sheesh Mahal Museum has been carried out by Parmeshwari Lal Gupta and Sanjay Garg under the aegis of the Indian Institute of

27. *Ibid.*

28. Karan Bir Singh, "Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala" *The Panjab Past and Present*, Patiala, Vol. XIX, 1986, p. 128.

29. Selected Patiala State Correspondence regarding *Nazrana* Coins. Appendix B.

30. *Ibid.*

## PATIALA STATE MINT AND NAZRANA COINS

Research in Numerimetric Studies, Anjaneri, Nasik. They have drawn up a catalogue of the coins of the Dal Khalsa and Lahore Darbar on behalf of Government of Punjab. They have shown some coins as "problematic coins" at the end of their book.<sup>31</sup> The House of Patiala, being Sikhs by religion, have been worshipping certain Rajput traditions, like workshop of eternal fire in the city fort, *pujas* during Dussehra and Diwali etc. They have been using both gold and silver coins specially minted for these occasions as is abundantly clear from the state records with Punjab Archives. The mark of an arrow-head appears to be of Maharhja Bhupinder Singh in his early days and that of a rifle during his later years. The coins readily available are those of 1958, 1993, 1994 Sambat i.e., 1901, 1936, 1937 A.D., all pertaining to his period.<sup>32</sup> The coins with Sikh legend are called 'Guru Sahib' coins in the state records. The theory that dual coins were used by Ala Singh to appease the Durrani as well the Dal Khalsa as proposed by Parmeshwari Lal Gupta, does not appear to be correct against Watter Hamilton's suggestion that these coins were connected with religious ceremonies whatever has been his basis for the same. These coins are available in the museum and no such coin is with the local *sarafs*. Besides, these coins are in mint condition. The coins and the records connected with them as available with the state archives, clearly establish that these coins are no longer problematic ones, but have been the *nazarna* coins used by the Patiala rulers for *puja* etc., as distinct from the state currency.

### Historical Survey of Patiala Currency

The Patiala rupee was known as the *Raja Shahi* rupee; it was of an inch in circumference weighed  $11\frac{1}{8}$  *mashas* and was of pure silver. The Patiala gold mohar weighed  $10\frac{3}{4}$  *mashas* and was of pure gold. No copper coin was struck in Patiala.

The inscription on the gold and silver coins was the same. On one side it was inscribed :—

حکم شہزاد قادر بیچون با محمد بادشاہ - سیکہ فنا بر سیم در زاز اوج مابھی تا سماہ -

31. See Appendix C.

32. The coins of 1958 and 1994 *sambat* are shown in the photograph attached and coins of 1993 have been shown by Parmeshwari Lal Gupta in his account on problematic coins.



On the other side the inscription was :—

جلوس یمنت مانوس ضرب سریندر

The translation of which is : “The order of God, the peerless to Ahmad Badshah : strike coin on silver and gold from earth to heaven”, (this is the real meaning of the passage; actual words are “From the height of the Fish to the Moon.”) “In the presence of favoured of high fortune, the Sirhind coinage ”

The inscription on the coin remained unchanged but certain alterations were made in the marks to mark the reign of each chief (Maharaja Amar Singh’s rupee was distinguished by the representation of *kalghi*; Maharaja Sahib Singh’s by that of a *saif* (two edged sword), Maharaja Karam Singh’s had a *shamsher* on his coin, Maharaja Narinder Singh’s coin had a *kattar* (straight sword) and Maharaja Mohinder Singh’s rupee was distinguished by a dagger.

The mint was supervised by a Superintendent with an establishment of a *moharrir*, two testers, one weigher, 10 blacksmiths, 2 coiners, 4 refiners of metal and one engraver. The metals were refined carefully and brought upto the standard of gold and silver kept as specimen in the mint; these were tested and then coined. Metal brought by individuals was coined at the following rates :—

Silver 1 rupee 1 anna per hundred coins of which 0-6-6 went to the establishment.

Gold 24 rupees per hundred coins; State 17-2-6, establishment dues 1-2-0, Miscellaneous expenses 5-11-6.

The annual out turn of the coin was uncertain and coin was struck either on special occasions or when wanted. From the years 1933 B to 1949 B 45,49,867 rupees were coined at the Patiala mint; representing on an average approximately rupees 2½ lacs annually. The *Raia Shahi* rupee was legal tender in the State territory.

#### **Proposal to Remodel the Patiala Coin and Making it a Legal Tender in British India.**

On the occasion of Viceregal Darbar held at Pinjore by Lord Dalhousie in 1851. His Highness Maharaja Narinder Singh requested to His Lordship orally and in writing for permission to remodel his coin by substituting the inscription of Ahmad Shah Abdali by that of Queen Victoria and making the Patiala coin legal tender in British India. The

#### PATIALA STATE MINT AND NAZRANA COINS

papers regarding this question are unfortunately not traceable in the office, but it appears that no definite answer was given by the Government.

In the year 1869 Major General R.C. Taylor, C.S., C.S.I., Agent to the Lt. Governor General cis-Sutlej states wrote to the Patiala Vakil at Ambala at the instance of the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India to supply information on certain aspects of the Patiala mint viz :—

- (i) Political condition.
- (ii) Nature, title and character of the coinage.
- (iii) The annual out turn of the establishment, and the value of the coinage as compared with that of the British Government.
- (iv) The process of manufacture and any particulars as to the artificers employed.
- (v) The arrangements for receiving bullion and the charges (if any) levied for its conversion into coins.
- (vi) The area of its circulation.

While forwarding the required information H. H. Maharaja Mohinder Singh Sahib Mohinder Bahadur reiterated the request made by his father, the late Maharaja Narinder Singh referred to above and requested him to obtain and communicate Governments' sanction in this behalf.

In reply the agent cis-Sutlej states intimated in his *murasala* dated 22 Dec. 1877 that "His Honour the Lt. Governor Punjab quite concurs with the 1st proposal of your Highness. As regards the 2nd question viz. making of Patiala rupee legal tender in British India. His Honour thinks it would require sanction of the Governor General in Council who it is feared would not acquiesce in the proposal. But if your Highness so propose that the Patiala coins should be struck in the Government Mint at Calcutta and be equal to that of the Government coin in respect of purity and value then there is every probability of the public accepting it like Government coin. This will also reduce the cost incurred in the present mode of preparation of the coin in the Patiala Mint. I am, therefore, to inquire whether this proposal commends itself to your Highness."

The Patiala State instead of availing of this opportunity declined the offer on the ground of the proposal involving inconvenience and embarrassment.

#### **Government of India Undertakes to Mint Copper Coins for the State.**

Two years later the Patiala State was informed by the Agent to the Lt. Governor cis-Sutlej States in his *murasalas* dated 29 Aug, 1871 that the Government of India has thrown open its mint to the

Native States for copper coinage on a charge of one rupee per one thousand coins if copper be supplied by the states. In the case otherwise the cost of the copper at the market rate will be taken from them. The Patiala State availed of this concession in the year 1882 when copper coins valuing rupees 50,000/- were purchased from the Government of India. Subsequent to this supply the concession was withdrawn by the Government of India but no protest was made by the State.

#### **The Passing of the Native Coinage Act No. IX of 1876 by the Government of India**

In the year 1876, the Government of India passed an act called the Native Coinage Act No. IX of 1876. The object of the Act was to enable the Government of India to declare certain coins of Native State to be legal tender in British India but no action was taken under it with regard to any Native State in the Punjab till many years afterwards.

In the year 1893, the Government of India stopped the striking of silver coins in their mints and asked the Native States in the Punjab not to coin rupees in their mints on a large scale for a period of 6 months to avoid fluctuation in the exchange ratio of their coins with that of the Government. This circular was also forwarded by the Chief Secretary, Punjab Government, to the Patiala *Mo'tamid* under cover of his D.O. Letter dated November 20, 1893.

#### **Stopping the Coinage of Rajashahi Rupee and the Adoption of Government Rupee as Legal Tender in the State**

But the Patiala State had already, discussed the situation arising out of this policy of the Government and at the recommendation of its senior ministers stopped the further coinage of *Raja Shahi* rupee which had already very much depreciated till further orders and adopted the Government rupee as legal tender in the State and issued orders telegraphically to the Departments concerned for compliance. The Chief Secretary was, therefore, informed in reply through the State *Mo'tamid* that the coining of rupees had already been stopped in the Patiala mint. These orders were never subsequently revoked. Only this much relaxation was made by then Prime Minister at the suggestion of the then Foreign Minister that rupees may be coined for those who may ask for them on levy of usual charges but these shall not be acceptable in Government transaction. The gold coins were struck as usual and there was no prohibition for them.

#### **Rai Bahadur Sirdar Chiranji Lal's Suggestions for the Revival of the State Mint.**

This case remained lying for about 2 decades without any further

#### PATIALA STATE MINT AND NAZRANA COINS

action being taken. In the year 1914 R.B. Sirdar Chiranji Lal, the then Accountant General revived the question and wrote to then Foreign Mintster a detailed letter. It is quite evident that the Government never intended to stop the currency of the State rupees. It was only this that the Government imposed certain limitations as to fineness and weight of the rupee. It can safely be said that the Act provides, on the contrary that the Government of India undertakes to mint silver sent by a Native State.

The requirements of the State and its subjects have increased many times with those that existed when the mint was opened for the public in the thirties and forties. It is only proper that the question be taken up in right earnest and pressed through. The States of Alwar and Bikaner get their rupees minted at the Government mints and their rupee is a legal tender throughout British India. If the Government is influenced to mint Patiala rupees to the extent of 10 lacs a year it will bring a permanent income to the State of at least of 2 lacs annually beside having our own coin.

#### **Raja Sir Daya Kishan Kaul Ex-Prime Minister's Views :**

For 3 years no actions appears to have been taken until in July 1919 the Ex-Prime Minister Raja Bir Daya Kishan Kaul took up the matter. It was observed that there was nothing on this file to prevent the Patiala Government resorting to either of the two following measures :

1. to mint their own coins subject to the provision of the Government of India.
2. to ask the Government of India to mint coins for the State by supplying the metal, under the provisions of the Native Coinage Act IX of 1876 which, I take it still holds good as it has not been repealed with a population of 15 lacs and an annual expenditure budget of nearly 1½ crore of rupees it will be only very reasonable if we asked the Government of India for minting for us upto :
  - (a) Rs. ten lac worth of rupees and smaller silver coins.
  - (b) Rs. fifty thousand worth of copper coins.
  - (c) Rs. ten thousand worth of sovereigns.

In every year, according to our requirement the fixing should be left to our discretion. We can suggest our design for the obverse and reverse of each coin.

The Accountant General might be consulted about the quantities of

each description of coin referred to above and then an *arzdasht* should be submitted to His Highness with a draft letter to the Political Agent, for reference to Government of India, for His Highness' approval.

After this the matter again seems to have been neglected and for about many years nothing practically has been done in this most important case. The Accountant General who was written in confirmity to Ex-Prime Minister's orders states that the Prime Minister's note dated 15 July 1999 will suffice to carry on cash transaction in the State vis.

Silver coins worth Rs.	10,00,000
Copper coins worth Rs.	40,000
Gold Coins worth Rs.	1,60,000

#### **Sardar Sunder Singh Ex-A.G.'s Opinion**

But he adds that gold coin is not legal tender in India and as the price of sovereign is always subject to market fluctuation it will pay little to the State.

The Accountant General's reply is dated 13 Poh 1922 and no subsequent orders have been passed.

This is in brief the history of this important case which if I may be permitted to say has not been seriously tackled in the past. Since the mint was closed not only has the population of the State increased but the number of transactions for which actual money is used has increased enormously. Statistics have been collected by the Government of India regarding the number of rupees in circulation during the last thirty years and it will not be out of place to cite them here as giving an idea of the requirements of our state with a population of nearly 15 lacs.

Year	Population	Rupees issued from mints
1890	28,73,14,671	308.83 Crore
1900	29,43,61,056	438.30 Crore
1910	31,51,56,396	466.81 Crore
1920	31,89,42,480	646.84 Crore
1922	31,87,42,480	647.55 Crore

Subsidiary coinage has also been issued during the Great War.

The most remarkable phenominon, however is the continued rise in the note issued by the Government of India. The profits reaped by the Government of India from the currency and mint stand at a clossal figure of 3.99 crores annually.

## PATIALA STATE MINT AND NAZRANA COINS

The question has a political aspect also. Money as an expression of sovereignty is a cherished privilege of autonomous States, and many States should like to cling on to it even if their mints be working at a loss.

The case was also put up to S. D. K. Sen at Delhi and he was of the opinion that there is no encroachment by the Government of India in this case and the State retains the right of having its own currency.

The case is worth being taken up by the surplus Committee and requires being thrashed in all its aspects before being taken up with the Government of India.

### ANNEXURE B

Copy of a letter No 2556 dated 10 Bhadon 1992 from the Treasury Office, Patiala to the Accountant General, Patiala.

#### **Purchase of Gold**

Adverting to the correspondence resting with my letter No. 2164 dated 18 Sawan 1992, I have the honour to state that as intimated vide this office letter No. 554 dated 4 Jeth 1992, the total quantity of gold required for the whole year 1992 for making Patiala Mohars, half Mohars and Puja Coins was 3100 tolas but as some Mohars and half Mohars were credited into the Treasury by the main Marriage Committee and the Deorhi Mualla Department, Mohars and half Mohars required for Guru Puja and Saloono were supplied out of the coins credited by the above department and now the total quantity of gold required can be reduced to 2400 tolas out of which purchase of 500 tolas has already been sanctioned by the Finance Minister, and steps, I understand, are being taken to auction a contract for that quantity. I, therefore, request you to kindly obtain sanction of the Finance Minister to the purchase of 1900 tolas of gold more and 260 tolas of silver and request him to auction a contract for the total quantity of 2400 tolas of gold and 260 tolas of silver at one and the same time. The gold and silver may kindly be arranged to be supplied to the Treasury on the 5th Asauj, 1992s at the latest so that the Puja coins and Mohars and half Mohars may be prepared in time. This may please be treated as urgent.

Dated 24 Sep. 1938.

Sd/-

#### **Precis**

On receipt of a request from the Accountant General, the contract for the supply of 850 tolas of Rajashahi gold and 65 tolas of silver (qurs) was auctioned in the first instance on 30 Aug., 38. The bid however

could not be concluded in view of the circumstances explained in this office U.O. No. 448/K dated 31 Aug., 38/16 Bhadon 95 to the Prime Minister (Copy enclosed) whereupon the Finance Committee granted provisional authorisation to the contract being given out at the joint discretion of the Accountant General, Assistant Secretary (Finance) and the Treasury Officer if they considered the price reasonable.

The contract was reauctioned accordingly by the Accountant General and the Assistant Secretary, Finance, (the Treasury Officer being on leave) on 5 Sep., 38. The last bids obtained for gold Rajashahi and silver (qurs) were Rs. 35-6-9 per tola and Rs. 51/- per hundred tolas in the names of Messrs Bajra Mal Bhagirath Mal and Ch. Abdul Hakim respectively. These rates were considered reasonable and the orders were placed with the contractors on the spot.

May it please Your Highness,

I most respectfully beg to solicit your Highness' gracious sanction to the contract for the supply of 850 tolas of gold Rajashahi and 65 tolas of silver (qurs) at Rs. 35-6-9 per tola and Rs. 51/- per hundred tolas in favour of Messrs Bajra Mal Bhagirath Mal and Ch. Abdul Hakim.

With utmost respects.

Dated : 24 Sept., 1938

Yours Highness' most obedient servant.

Sd./-

Finance Minister.

Copy of a letter No. 2085 dated 10 May 96 from the Treasury Officer, Patiala to the Accountant General, Patiala.

Regarding sanction of contract of gold and silver for preparation of gold and silver Puja coins etc. for Dushehra and Diwali Festivals 1996.

I have the honour to state that 250 Guru Sahib Coins of 12 mashas each and 272 Patiala State Mohars of 11 mashas each are required to be prepared for Puja on the occasion of Dushehra and Diwali Festivals as well as 327 *atthmashies* for the requirements of Deorhi Mualla. The balance of these latter coins with us is only sufficient to meet the unforeseen requirements.

To make all the above noted gold coins 800 tolas of gold is required. In addition to the above 250 silver coins shall also have to be prepared, for whose preparation 255 tolas of silver *qurs* is needed. It is, therefore, requested that you will kindly move the Finance Minister Patiala to auction the contract for the purchase of 800 tolas of gold Raja Shahi

PATIALA STATE MINT AND NAZRANA COINS

and 255 tolas of silver qurs by the 25th Bhadon, 1996.

A copy of the terms and conditions of the previous contract is enclosed herewith.

Office of the Accountant General, Patiala

No. 2911

Dated 25 Bhadon 96

Copy along with the original terms submitted to the Finance Minister His Highness' Government, Patiala with the request that he will kindly auction the contract for the supply of 800 tolas Raja Shahi gold and 255 tolas silver Gurs at his earliest convenience.

Accountant General  
Patiala (R.K.V.)

Draft for Favour of Approval

**Precis**

On receipt of a requisition from the Accountant General for the purchase of 650 tolas of gold and 250 tolas of silver required for the preparation of gold and silver puja coins etc. for Dussehra and Diwali festivals, the contract for the same was auctioned by the Assistant Secretary Finance Department, the Assistant Accountant General, and the Treasury Officer, Patiala, on 15 Sep., 1941 in the Patiala treasury after giving wide publicity by beat of drum in the city by issuing a circular notice to the individual *sarrafs* etc. and by pasting a notice in this connection on the office notice board of the Finance Office. As the rate of gold these days constantly remains changing, I had authorised the Accountant General to conclude the bids then and there, who has done so. The other member of the Finance Committee was informed of this fact and he agreed to this procedure. The last bid for 650 tolas of *Raja Shahi* gold was concluded in favour of L. Lekh Ram at Rs. 40-14-0 per tola while for 250 tolas of silver is in favour of L. Munshi Ram at Rs. 63-4-0 per hundred tolas. The rates obtained are reasonable. As the amount of expenditure exceeds Rs. 10,000, therefore, sanction of the finance committee is necessary.

May it please Your Highness,

I most respectfully solicit Your Highness's gracious sanction to the purchase of 650 tolas of *Raja Shahi* gold from Lala Lekh Ram at Rs. 40-14-0 per tola and 250 tolas of silver from L. Munshi Ram at Rs. 63-4-0 per 100 tolas.

With utmost respects and devotion,

Your Highness's most obedient servant  
Finance Minister.

PC/16 Sep., 41



Office of the Accountant General, Patiala

Dated 25 Har 2000

## THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL PATIALA

The Finance Minister,  
His Highness' Government  
Patiala.

Reg. : Requirement of Chaumashies and Pooja coins for 2000B

Sir,

I have the honour to state that the Treasury Officer Patiala has, vide Mis Letter No. 1238 dated 16 Har 2000, reported that the Karora Ranwas Mubarik and the Sardar Sahib Deorhi Mulla have intimated their requirements for Gold coins as under :—

	Chaumashies	Domashies
Sardar Sahib Deorhi Mualla	674	73
Karora Ranwas Mubarik	100	—
Other Departments	80	—
	Total : 854	73

Besides this, 250 Guru Sahib coins and 272 eleven mashies of gold are required to be prepared for Dusehra and Diwali festivals. Similarly silver coins worth 250 totals of silver are required to be prepared for the above mentioned occasions.

Last year these silver and gold coins were got prepared by melting old pooja coins. As the time is still not favourable and rates of silver and gold are still too high. I request that similar procedure may kindly be allowed to be adopted this year too, to meet the requirement of pooja coins.

As regards preparation of *chaumashies*, the Treasury Officer Patiala has reported that the balance of gold coins in the Treasury at present is as under :—

*atthmashies*—521, *chaumashies*—71, *domashies*—325.

Keeping in view the fact that it is not advisable to purchase gold at this stage and *atth* mashies are not used frequently now, I propose that mashies may kindly be allowed to be prepared by melting 450 *atth mashies*.

Early instructions may kindly be issued in the matter.

PATIALA STATE MINT AND NAZRANA COINS

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,  
Accountant General,  
Patiala (B.K.S.)  
24 Har, 2000

Deodhi Mulla Department Patiala

No. Dated Patiala 16 Bhadon, 2000

From

Sardar Sahib Deodhi Mulla, Patiala.

To,

The Finance Minister,  
His Highness' Govt., Patiala.

Re : Preparation of Puja coins.

Sir,

With reference to your letter No. 3595 dated 27 July, 1943, I have the honour to state that though the coins, once used in Puja by the August Master cannot be used again according to the injunctions of the Shastras, but keeping in view the high rates of gold and silver, I have no objection if these are minted after melting down the old coins which are lying the Reserve Treasury.

Regarding your query about further reduction in the use of gold and silver during war time, I would like to point out that this cannot be done without reducing the Sarishtas observed in the various occasions and it is not within my competence to do so. A copy of this letter has been sent to the Accountant General, Patiala, as desired by you telegraphically.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,  
Sardar Sahib Deodhi Mualla,  
Patiala-Camp Chail  
6 Bhadon, 2000=22 Aug., 43.

ANNEXURE C

Problematic Coins

This collection has about 1500 silver coins of the above type. Had they not some peculiarities of their own on the reverse, they would well have been mistaken as the Nabha coinage. Here, some of the coins have

a spear pointed downward and some others have a rifle with bayonet placed vertically. The coins having the spear symbol have the figures 58 and those with rifle have the figure 94 by the right of these symbols. The mint name on these coins is Sirhind.

There are a few gold coins (1/3 Mohar) not in this collection. With the above reverse showing spear with figure 58 and rifle with figure 94. The reverse of these coins is that of the Durrani exactly the same as is adopted on the Patiala coins. Along with these facts, the fact that large number of these coins belong to the Sheesh Mahal collection, make it certain that these coins would have been issued only by Patiala.

They pose the question as to why Patiala, which had always associated itself with the Durrani rulers and issued its coins of their type, issued these particular coins adopting the Sikh obverse pattern?

Watter Hamilton has suggested that these coins were used in connection with religious ceremonies at Dussehra and Diwali. But this seems unlikely. Dussehra has nothing to do to the Sikhs. Only Diwali has some importance to them. They hold the Sarbat Khalsa meeting on this day. But then, it is to be noted that Patiala always had been indifferent to these meetings. There seems no reason as to why should Patiala issue these coins on these occasions.

It should not be lost sight that the coins bear two different symbols with two different figures, which seems to be some dates. If so, they would be representing Samvat 1853 (1796 A.D.) and 1894 (1737 A.D.) and thus they mean that they were issued on two different occasions. Only these figures would provide some clue to answer the question.

## Book Review

*Rise of the Sikh Power in Punjab* by N. M. Khilnani, Independent Publishing Company, Delhi, 1990, pp. 221, Price : Rs. 210/-

The work under review covers the evolution and development of twelve Sikh Mislis into a dynamic regional monarchy under the leadership of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The second part delineates the Sikh character and achievements during the British; while the third deals with the post-independence period and specifically to the present stalemate in the Punjab.

The semi-independent clans (mislis) were pursuing a policy of self-aggrandisement at a time when British Imperialism was rapidly spreading its tentacles over the peninsula. At this time Ranjit Singh came to the scene. He was not only the maker of the Punjab state but his personality was the main factor which lent stability and coherence to the kingdom. He knew well that to prevent the Sikhs turning upon himself, or contending with one another, he must regularly engage them in conquest and remote warfare.

Before Ranjit Singh the confederacy of the Sikhs had a semi-democratic institution, called the 'Gurumatta'. He replaced it by the council of ministers which comprised of five distinct groups, namely : Dogra Rajputs, Sikhs, Hindus including Brahmmins, Muhammadans and Europeans. This composition helped the Maharaja in preventing any plotting against his supermacy. Consequently when he died their efforts were directed to individual gain and advantage rather than collective benefit (Chapter III).

In Chapter II the author discusses Maharaja's attitude towards religion, learning and education, welfare of the masses, health services, personality and his taste for women. Further he questions that why did Ranjit Singh not attack the British ? For that he argues that no adequate answer can be given but perhaps he wanted to postpone the day of reckoning with the British for as long as humanly possible so as to consolidate his political and military strength. He found the Punjab a warring confederacy, a prey to the faction of its chiefs, pressed by a ring of hostile elements and ready to submit to English supermacy. He also found his military though brave but ignorant of war as an art.

In Chapter IV the author comes to the rise of British Imperialism through its manouverings and tactics to control the state. The early administrator's attitude of parental benevolence helped in placating the restless nobility and the army. Under the British, the Punjab progressed in agriculture while peace and prosperity prevailed. It was owing to this cause that the Punjab did not participate in the national movement of 1857. Feeling of revenge amongst the Sikhs against Delhi where Guru Tegh Bahadur was crucified was another factor along with the idea that the British were the world power not to be defeated.

Sikh Jats of the Punjab soon became favourites of the *Feranghee* because the British encouraged and pampered them. They used them (the Sikhs) as a balancing lever between the Hindus and the Muslims. (p. 157). But the author contradicts (p. 158) by stating that during the British rule the Sikhs and few Hindus were assimilated into the 'Panjabees' and the relationship of 'roti' and 'beti' was established. The partisan functioning of the dynamic, compact and somewhat aggressive Muslim community favoured and fawned by the British served to cement the unity between the Sikhs and the Hindus. Again he writes (p. 11) that as long as Punjab was a united political entity, its society consisting of three vital ingredients, the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims, had balance and stability.

In the 'introduction' the author claims that "hitherto many books on the recent developments in the Punjab have been written but their approach has been negative," however, without defining how it is so. On the other he argues that "the pressing question is how to utilize and develop the potential and the practical possibilities of the Sikhs? We (sic) have been devoting too much attention to petty politicians (who are they?) who are just straws in the wind. Within half a decade they will evaporate." If the author hints at the handful of extremists than the recent 'Panjab Bandhs' on June 7th and July 2nd, 1990 are enough to show that they still draw larger support among the people of Punjab; whatever the causes may be.

Further, the author writes that the moment the Punjab was partitioned the centrifugal forces went out of control. The Panjabi society was fragmented. The second partition of the Punjab, as an aftermath of 'States Reorganisation' into Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and present Punjab, made the Hindu and Sikh elements lost elan vital. Thus a weakened Punjab became the happy hunting ground of petty and self-centred politicians of the Punjab during the post-Nehruvian era.

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Contradicting the above statement the author tells the reader that Congress-I in 1969 began to encourage the extremist element in both Haryana and Punjab (one has not seen any sort of violence in Haryana on Punjab pattern so far). The Punjab tragedy began to be enacted when in 1975 Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Congress-I began to flirt with the Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindrawala group.

Further contradicting the above statements the author stressed that historically the seeds of Hindu-Sikh divide were sown by the British after the 1857 revolt and the present situation is an overflow of the morbid psyche developing since then. Wrong conception of history and religious fanaticism had led many to believe that religion and nationality were synonymous. Language and culture belong to a geographical region and not to a religion. (true) The only way out of the Punjab impasse was a revolt against religious obscurantism. (sic)

The author goes on that the Sikhs (common or the extremists ?) now do not seem to be satisfied with the constitutional democracy based on power sharing between Sikhs and Hindus. It is this gap between their perception and their achievements which has created a deprivation syndrome.

Coming to the solution of Punjab crisis the author repeats that in this context speedy implementation of Rajiv-Longowal Accord, unconditional giving of Chandigarh to Punjab, status of Gurmukhi and a National Education Trust for advancement of Sikh community with emphasis on spread of scientific education should be set up, initially with the capital of Rs. 500 crores. Every village in Punjab should have a 'Vigyan Mandir' to make both the communities scientific minded.

On the whole, the work itself is the repetition of the arguments regarding the Misls, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule and the nature of the Sikh relationship with the British. More confused is the identification of the roots of the present Punjab crisis and so is the solution. Lack of consistency in arguments, authenticity with empirical evidence, repetitions and full of spelling mistakes adds to what the author himself calls 'negative.'

NAV TEJ SINGH\*

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\*Lecturer, Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.

## II

J.S. Dhanki, *Lala Lajpat Rai and Indian Nationalism* (Jalandhar : ABS Publications, 1990) pp. xix + 442, Price : Rs. 350.

This monograph has grown out of its author's Ph D. thesis submitted to the Panjab University, Chandigarh in 1976. Between 1976 and 1990, Dr Joginder Singh Dhanki has come out with two other well researched books, one each on Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh, the two great sons of the Punjab and Indian patriots. He shared the authorship of his book on Ajit Singh with his Ph.D. Supervisor, Professor Pardaman Singh, a known senior in the field of historical research, who initiated him into scholarship. The monograph is his third book.

Dr Dhanki has divided his present theme into seven chapters exclusive of the *conclusion*. These are entitled as (i) *Emergence* (ii) *Lajpat Rai and the National Movement, 1905-1914* (iii) *The Deportation*, (iv) *Sojourn Abroad, 1915-1919*, (v) *First Mass Anti-Colonial Struggle and Lajpat Rai, 1920-22*, (vi) *Last Phase : The Swaraj Party and the Simon Commission*, and (vii) *Lajpat Rai and Communal Politics in India*. Keeping in view the theoretical potential of the theme of the book, it will not be possible for this review to follow the chapter scheme of the author because that may lead to repetition and even confusion. Instead, we shall touch upon the topical concerns of Lajpat Rai in sphere of our national life during the colonial phase. His ideological position covering his relationship with the Indian National Congress, Arya Samaj and Hindu Sabha movements, the British regime, the Muslims, and his attitude towards capitalism and imperialism as a whole shall be commented upon in brief. But to be topical is to be selective which is not easy in this case for the book is very rich in factual data. To make the reader aware of this material dimension of the work, a brief mention of the sources tapped by Dr Dhanki will not be out of place.

*Lala Lajpat Rai and Indian Nationalism* is based on the data found in both India and out-side. *Acknowledgement* show its location in various organizations in Delhi, Chandigarh, Patiala, London, Amherst and Washington. *Bibliography* and *References* contain nine kinds of primary sources alone. Their most significant part is the private papers of the five Viceroys of India, sixteen important Indian leaders, and eleven important non-Indian persons from the U.K. and U.S.A. The list of the private papers is impressive not only for its numbers but also for the

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names it has. They read : Chelmsford, Halifax, Hardinge, Minto, Reading, Nao:ji, Gokhle, Chitnavis, Harbhau, Jamnadass Bajaj, J.L. Nehru, K Iyiar, Motilal Nehru, Gandhi, N.M. Joshi, Jaykar, Hardikar, F Mehta, Purshottam Dass Thakur Dass, S.A. Brelvi, G. Villard, Cotton, Huebsch, Wedgewood, Sunder lal, Prof. Massey, Passfield, MacDonald, Lipman and Dubois.

Combined with about two dozen writings of Lalaji himself by Dr Dhanki, the Private Papers help us to understand the age and personality of the man. His story thus constructed, at the very outset shatters one very popular myth about Lajpat Rai, the myth that he was an extremist, one in the triumvirate of 'Lal-Bal-Pal.' Dr Dhanki's *Introduction* refutes this by saying that, "In politics his vision was independent" (X). Lajpat Rai was a friend of Tilak after 1893 but at the same time he was a supporter of Gokhle also. He never subscribed to violence as a political creed. Likewise, he was often sympathetic towards the terrorists but he never approved terrorism as a political weapon, especially if coming from the anti-England European powers. But certainly much of extremism had been attributed to him in the report of C.I.D. and its men. The latter never left him alone and always put him in the extremist—terrorist-revolutionary class of Indian nationalists.

According to Dr Dhanki, Lajpat Rai was a 'foremost' congress leader (316). It is true but this statement should not be swallowed as such. Lajpat Rai 'joined' the Congress movement in 1888 but left it the very next year, and that too for the next fourteen years. He was active for the Congress from 1903 to 1908 but almost withdrew from it for five years from 1908. From 1914 to 1920, he was not in India, though did some useful work for the national cause in England, U.S.A. and Japan. From 1920 to 1923, he wholeheartedly worked for the Congress, but for the next three years he was a 'Swarajist.' However, soon he revolted against Motilal, and formed the Independent Congress Party. Lajpat Rai was not always a man of the Indian National Congress.

Lalaji was a religious patriot and Hindu nationalist but he was not a theologically loaded political like Aurbind Ghose. Nor was he a theoretically apolitical but practically a man of the administration like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Even while active in the Arya Samaj and Hindu Sabha movements he did not approve that these organizations should either be *apolitical* or political organizations working in parallel to the Congress. By 1926 he was secular enough to reject the idea of 'Hindu Raj' (p. 378). He was opposed to those Hindu Sabhites who favoured a pro-government



line to counter the Muslim League at the political level. Although not sure of Hindu-Muslim unity, yet Lalaji never believed that the Hindus had a political future different from the Muslims. He was 'incharge of Hindu embassy' but did not represent it through a political organization other than the Congress. Lajpat Rai was not always a Congress-man but he seldom acted as its enemy even while away from it.

Like any other communalist, Lajpat Rai was doubtful about the methods, objectives and success-chances of the Congress from the very beginning. Also, he stood by those who sought to organize Hindu Sabha movement. He approved of *shudhi* and *sangathna*. Hindu unity was his cherished dream. He opposed the separate electorates and questioned the political wisdom of the Congress-League Pact of 1915(Lucknow Pact).

Yet Lajpat Rai had a firm belief in the constitutional methods, electoral process and parliamentary institutions with equal political right to all irrespective of religion. He favoured even political weightage for the Muslims as a religious community. He was aware of the significance of Hindu-Muslim united front against the British Imperialism. He studied the Hindu-Muslim problem most thoroughly and tried to solve it through the Nehru-Report. For this he even advocated proportionate representation. At times, he would demand separation of politics from religion. The reality is that Lajpat Rai was a source of, both, inspiration, and trouble, for Hindu nationalism.

The most interesting part of Dr Dhanki's book is that which shows Lalaji's transformation from a denominationalist to socialist. The process started by 1905 and his tours to England played the chief role in this respect. His socialist and labour radical friends from the U.K. taught him the political value of the masses as well as the role of 'efficiency' in national life. Keeping in view the urgency of 'efficiency', Lalaji started disapproving the politics of disorder and also the politics of always opposing England. While abroad between 1914 and early 1920, Lalaji also started thinking over the foreign policy of free India in the near future.

London made him aware of the racial problem in South Africa, and the problems of the Muslim world, particularly Turkey. Two changes occurred in his political attitude. First, he started doubting the capacity of the middle classes to liberate India politically and economically. He would look towards the working class. This led him to be active for the formation of All India Trade Union Congress in 1920.

The second was his new posture towards the Muslims. He actively

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worked for the Khilafat agitation. For the sake of Hindu-Muslim unity and Swaraj, he accepted Gandhi as his leader.

However, his march towards socialism does not seem to be persistent. The rising communal tempers expressing itself through Hindu-Muslim riots after 1923 might be the one cause for his. By 1926, he was a staunch Hindu Sabhaite in his own way. To this personal dismay, much of the communal violence was taking place in his own home province, Punjab. It was providing justification to the imperialist propaganda that Indians were not fit for self-rule because they, as Hindus and Muslims, would be at each other's throat the moment British withdrew from the scene. Simon had been sent to give air to this idea. Lalaji challenged this idea and confronted Simon in the streets of Lahore. In person he led a huge procession of Hindus and Muslims but it was at the expense of his own life.

The year 1928 took away from India one of her bravest political sons. His death was partly avenged by a group of socialist revolutionaries led by Sardar Bhagat Singh. India's honour and determination for struggle to be free was further vindicated when another socialist, Jawahar Lal, gave from the banks of Ravi a call for 'complete independence'.

Who would have been the choice of Lalaji, Nehru or Bhagat Singh? This is the question that naturally comes to one's mind after reading Dr Dhanki's book. But the latter is silent on this issue. Perhaps for him the chief legacy of Lala Lajpat Rai was in the sphere of Hindu-Muslim question. Socialism was peripheral to his interest.

On the whole *Lala Lajpat Rai and Indian Nationalism* is an excellent narrative of political events relative to Lajpat Rai and colonial India. The book is also a good example of objective scholarship and deserve attention of all students of colonial India.

NAZER SINGH\*

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\*Lecturer in History, Correspondence Courses, Panjabi University, Patiala.

## III

*Imperial Rule in Punjab : The Conquest and Administration of Multan, 1818-1881* : by Royal Roseberry, III, Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 1987, pp. 285. Price : Rs. 200/-.

The work concentrates on the British Conquest and Administration of Multan (1818-1881) rather than a study on the Imperial Rule in Punjab as a whole as the main title of the work suggests. However, the author's major contribution lies in delineating the interaction of the agents of the British rule and the indigenous population more especially the native leaders and elites. Nevertheless, the domination of the British was extended with much difficulty in the Indus Valley, north-west of Delhi albeit, in the historic city of Multan, challenge was posed by Diwan Mul Raj and certain tribal mercenaries. Roseberry gives an account of the struggle for Power among the 'British interlopers', Muslim and the Hindu inhabitants of Multan. He deals with the economic growth and judicial administration. Growing communal tensions also forms the subject matter of this study.

The work has been divided in 14 chapters equipped by a bibliography and the Index. The arrangement of chapters is quite logical : One—The Legacy of Sawan Mal : Multan Administration 1821-1844; Two—Diwan Mul Raj and the East India Company, 1844-1848; Three—Uprising at Multan, April 1848; Four—The Antagonists: Herbert Edwardes and Diwan Mulraj, 1848-1849; Five—Place and Wealth and Power : Elite Group Rivalries as a Decisive Factor in the Conquest of Multan, 1848-1849; Six—The Spoils of War: Aftermath of the Multan Insurrection, 1849-1850; Seven—The Administration and Land Revenue Systems of British Punjab, 1849-1857; Eight—Trial and Error: The Initial Phase of Imperial Administration in Multan, 1849-1857 ; Nine—Multan and the Mutiny, 1857-1858; Ten—The Post-Revolt Political Settlement, 1858-1880; Eleven—Judicial and Revenue Administration, 1858-1880; Twelve—Economic Growth and Social Dislocation, 1858-1885; Thirteen—Communal Confrontation at Multan, 1880-1881 so on and so forth. Besides, 8 maps have been given to make the study illustrative and interesting showing Multan District (1881); Southern Multan Province at the time of the campaign of 1884-89; Carvan Routes of Afghanistan and the Indus Valley in the 1830's. Also shown are tribes which preyed on caravans; British Punjab; Multan City and Environs in 1857; Principal Tribes of Multan District; Boundaries of the Bahawal Haq and Shrines during the

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reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh; Multan City and Fort in 1881. The material used in the work has been substantiated by notes given at the end of each and every chapter.

As regards the legacy of Diwan Sawan Mal's administration in Multan, the author holds that 'nearly every segment' of the population of Multan owed to his sagacious rule albeit, Muslim religious leaders did not receive any benefit. Author's argument in favour of Multan's resistance against the Company's rule is logical and appealing :

Company officials, particularly John Lawrence, miscalculated dangerously in assuming that an obstinate individual (Mul Raj, the Nazim) was the only problem in Multan. In fact, Mul Raj was merely the tip of an iceberg. Multanis long had been accustomed to going their own way. Discrediting the Diwan in the eyes of his subjects did not ensure that company could take over the province unopposed....

The author pleades that although the initial response of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslim to a perceived common danger on the eve of the uprising at Multan in April 1848 was to join forces against the rebels but deep divisions among them separated them. The author is right in his assessment of Mulraj in the context of the latter's revolt against the British when he says that the character of Mulraj is harder to appraise than that of his British nemesis. Since the *Nazim* neither wrote a book nor found a sympathetic biographer, he is known to posterity through the writings of his foes. Quite logically, the author refutes the plea given by Herbert Edwards in his *Year on the Frontier*, II, p. 161-63 that Mulraj was 'a complete coward who held out so long from dread of the hangman's noose and finally surrendered to avoid imminent death in battle.' The author advances the argument that Herbert Edward's comments are highly objectionable because he ignored the fact that the ramparts of the citadel and its interior parts had been virtually reduced to a wreck and under such a situation the military etiquette demanded that the defenders of the fortress could surrender without incurring any dishonour. The author also maintains quite reasonably that the group rivalries were a decisive factor in the conquest of Multan, 1848-49 by the British. Nevertheless, the appeal of company's regime pertaining to religious forbearance cannot be gainsaid, material consideration played a dominant role for Muslim elite's dissention to the *Nazim*. The author observes that the disruptions of war caused inconvenience to the

Hindu residents of Multan only for the time being because their long-established dominance was not at all challenged. Moreover, colonial rule brought for them the prospects of aggrandizement.

As regards the impact of British administration on the Punjab, the author views that somewhat contradictorily, a uniform revenue system was established. The British officers sometimes relaxed their supervision or fell out among themselves. The company's officials committed serious errors in the areas of revenue settlement and canal management system during the initial phase of 1849-57.

Regarding the position of Multan during the uprising of 1857, the author observes that British officials, however capable, were unable to 'keep the lid on' without the assistance provided by the Indian troops and the inhabitants of the Multan District. The author seems somewhat shattered and pro-British in his post-revolt political settlement conclusions of 1858-80. His observations regarding the communal confrontation at Multan are noteworthy :

"The advent of the British Raj on Multan scene disrupted a balance of political and economic power that had enabled Muslim and Hindus to endure one another for centuries. The divergent world-views of the two peoples determined their idiosyncratic responses to new conditions."

DR G. S. NAYYAR\*

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\*Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.

## BOOK REVIEW

### IV

*Philosophy of Sikhism (Reality and Its Manifestations)* by Nirbhai Singh, Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi, 1990, pp. XVI+308, Rs. 230.

Science, philosophy and religion, although distinctly different disciplines, have a common objective—search for the ultimate Truth. The road followed by each to reach this objective is, however, different. Whereas science probes mysteries of nature by following the trial-and-error method of experimentation; philosophy puts its trust in intellect and pure reason in pursuit of knowledge of the nature of reality and of categories of absolute truth, knowledge, justice, etc.; religion relies upon faith and intuition, otherwise called revelation, in its search for ultimate reality, nature, cause and goal of existence, and for liberation from the bondage of birth and death. Sikhism is a unique religion in that while it enjoins upon its followers faith in the revealed *shabad* (the word), it lays equal emphasis on the importance of *vichar* (reason) and *vivek* (discernment). Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism, says *sabad vichare ek liv tara; Nanak dhann savaranhara* (blessed is the reformer, O Nanak, who meditates upon the Word with single mindedness) (*Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 412).

That author's search for reality (both the absolute and manifest) is in the true spirit of the scriptural line quoted above, is evident from the book under review. It exhibits the author's wide knowledge and critical ability to make intricate philosophical problems easily understandable. It is rich with systematically and coherently reasoned philosophical concepts in general as well as of Sikhism in particular. Its well-structured plan of chapterisation is itself an index of the author's clarity of mind and profundity of thought. The opening introductory chapter includes a general statement of the problem, a review of the literature and sources on which the thesis is based, and the need and importance of the author's present effort. Chapter II contains an exposition of the concept of reality in Hinduism and Islam. This is followed by the author's central concern "Reality as Unity in Sikhism" and "Unity and Non-dualism in Sikhism" in chapter III. The following chapter dwells upon attributes of reality with special reference to *mulmantra* (the fundamental creedal formula of Sikhism) as well as to some modern philosophical interpretations. Chapter V is a statement of the Sikh view of appearances and reality and its comparison with the traditional Indian philosophical view of the concepts. Chapter VI

“Reality and Experience” reasons out in detail the distinctive nature of the Sikh theory of knowledge bringing out its difference with the earlier systems of Hinduism. While perceptual and rational modes are taken as valid sources of knowledge of manifest reality, intuition alone can afford an insight into the nature of ultimate reality. The seventh chapter deals with Sikh view of social reality and social values such as equality, universal brotherhood, altruism, *seva* (social service), justice and self-sacrifice. The whole discussion is wound up and succinctly summarised in ‘Conclusion’ which is followed by a bibliography of useful reference books and a detailed classified index. Copious notes are appended to each chapter.

According to the author, the Sikh view of reality as *ik* (lit.—one) is a spiritual continuum like time which is incapable of division into independent segments, although notionally so divided for practical understanding. The ultimate reality is the Formless Being (*nirankar*) which is not only the potential cause of all manifest forms (*akars*) but also forms its essence (*dhat*) and subsumes in itself the manifest reality. The self-luminous spiritual Being (*joti*) is immanent throughout the entire manifest (*jati*) *Maya*, the manifest existence, is not an illusion as held by the *advaitavadins*; it is real although not real in the sense of Ultimate Reality (*ik*). For Guru Nanak the universe (*qudrat*) is relatively real, but real all the same, because it is only an aspect of the One (*ik*). The non-dual nature of the *ik* and the universe (*sansar*) as its manifest form, constitutes a systematic unity. The system is regulated by one cosmic principle (*hukam*). In other words, the manifest world is a well-regulated coherent cosmos and not a chaos. Guru Nanak also makes use of the term *dharam* for the principle of coherence. The creator (*kartapurakh* or *sirjan'ar*) creates the manifest world (*jagat*) out of His oneness (*dhat*) and sustains it through His own way (*jugat*). *Jagat* (creation) and *jugat* (sustaining principle) are both aspects of the same *ik* (the One Reality).

The cohering principle *dharam* postulates ethical values for the smooth working of the socio-spiritual unity which together form the basis of Sikh ethics and determine the socio-religious institutions of the Sikhs. At the individual level, Sikh ethics is seemingly not different from that of other religious systems. But Sikhism is not an individualistic religion; it is congregational in nature based on the principle of universal brotherhood and universal well-being (*sarbat da bhala*). Hence the

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importance of *sangat* (congregation) which ultimately develops into the Khalsa-panth, an order directly related to the Formless One (*Vahiguru ji ka Khalsa*) in which each member not only endeavours for his own salvation but also participates actively in the communal life; nay, overcoming his *haumai* (I-ness or ego) he merges his self in the Universal Being, the *ik*.

Nirbhai Singh's book is an excellent exposition of the Sikh world view and is indicative both of his philosophical knowledge, topical as well as methodological, and his mature experience as teacher of comparative religion. The nature of his topic no doubt makes the book rather difficult for a lay reader, but would be, I am sure, a very useful book of reference for both scholars and researchers interested in the philosophy of Sikhism.

MAJOR GURMUKH SINGH (RETD.)\*

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\*Department of Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, Punjabi University, Patiala.